

IN THE LAND
OF
CECIL RHODES

BY

REV. P. A. STRASHEIM



J. du Plessis
1912

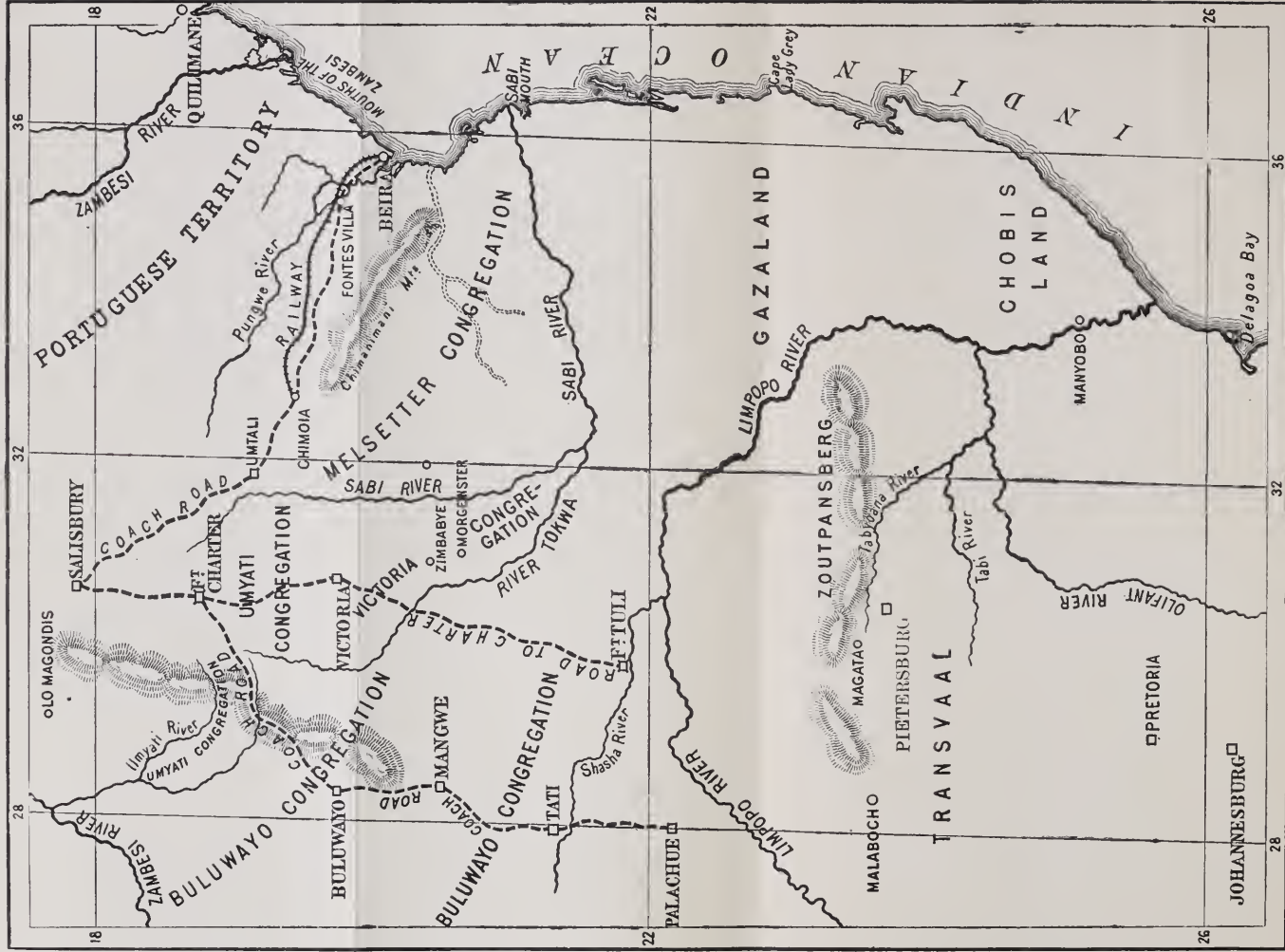
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IN THE LAND
OF
CECIL RHODES.

BY
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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH
IN RHODESIA AND GAZALAND.

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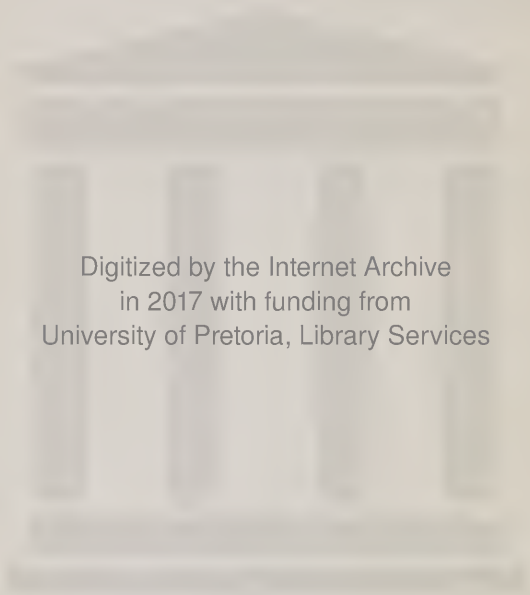
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PREFACE.

I VENTURE to offer an account of my travels and work in Rhodesia and Gazaland to English and Dutch friends with happy thoughts and feelings. The substance of these chapters has been delivered in the course of several lectures given at Montagu, Robertson, Worcester, Wellington, the Paarl and Capetown. Some of my friends thought that it would be necessary and advantageous to let a large audience know what they, with deep interest and emotion, heard whenever I had the pleasure of addressing them. With this view I gladly offer to the British and South African public the result of my mission.

As representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in Rhodesia and Gazaland, I place an official stamp on these pages. The observations recorded will bear the impress of unvarnished truth. They will, I hope, convince all that God has signally blessed the mission of my Church in the land of large-hearted and benevolent Cecil Rhodes.



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IN THE LAND OF CECIL RHODES.



CHAPTER I.

THE CALL.

THE Dutch Reformed Church, with its extensive mission work in the Colony, the Free State and Transvaal, and its numerous congregations from Cape-town to the Limpopo, has never been behind to further the interests of God's kingdom amongst white and black. The Church, often imperfectly represented by those who have no intimate knowledge of its vast extent and influence, is the oldest and largest denomination in South Africa and the adjoining States, forming the larger portion of the white inhabitants. The Free State and Transvaal have received their inhabitants in the main from the Mother Colony, and our Church is predominant by far in those lands.

The responsibility in spiritual matters vesting in the Colonial Church may be best understood when it is stated that in 1895 there were 210,399 souls, with 91,581 church members in the Colony; in the Free State 72,355 souls, with 29,944 members; in the

Transvaal 59,516 souls, with 27,064 members; in Natal 4,360 souls, with 2,045 members; and in Bechuanaland (since annexed to the Cape Colony) 4,415 souls, with 1,747 church members, giving a total of 351,985 souls and 152,901 Church members, all Europeans or whites, belonging to our Church. In addition to this the Home Mission in the Cape Colony counts 27 missionaries with parishes and synodical control amongst the coloured population, and the Foreign Mission occupies six stations in the Transvaal; Bechuanaland, Mochuli and Gordonias having their own large mission stations with a staff of missionaries and teachers, some of these stations being under the control of full-fledged ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, whilst Nyassaland has a staff of several missionaries, both men and women, all engaged in propagating the doctrines of salvation to heathens in far-off portions of our Continent.

The Dutch farmer has been known from the earliest history of our country to be fond of nomadic life. In this condition he has proved to be a valuable pioneer of civilisation in lands to the north of the Limpopo and even the Zambesi. Desirous of having a farm, where he has wide bounds, he invariably, when his progeny becomes too large, seeks for fresh pastures and settles down in his new domains with perfect composure, relying on whatever he has succeeded to bring over from the old home in the form of cattle, household goods and cash, and his seldom-erring gun. He commences to build up his home and farm requirements afresh, and in a few years becomes a well-to-do inhabitant of the new land.

It was to be foreseen, when the genius of Mr. Rhodes had succeeded in obtaining entrance into Mashonaland for white pioneers, that a host of farmers, belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church, would flock together in quest of new lands, to build up new homes. Hardly had it become known that a Company, endowed with a Charter by the British Government, was in paramount authority over Mashonaland, than hundreds of farmers proceeded to the Limpopo, and such as were disposed to submit to the generous and civilised demands and rules of the Company obtained large and valuable farms, where they settled down, and constantly caused fresh settlers to come over and peacefully occupy farms close to the pioneer farmers, where the majority are engaged in pursuing their pastoral avocations in peace and proportionate comforts.

The Church had been made aware from time to time of the religious needs of these people. Invariably, be it said to the credit of our members (with few exceptions), the farmer has not only his gun to rely on in moments of need, but is wont to have his Bible and his Prayer-book with him for daily use. Give him his farm and a small stock of agricultural implements, with some cattle, his wife and his children around him, and he feels very happy and in blissful rest; but when eventide approaches he loves to gather as many as may be with him around the family board and engage in Divine worship, however simple it may be in form or expression. The farmers of Mashonaland were no exception to this golden rule; and, as soon as they were initially settled, there was a craving for religious worship, and celebration of those holy

rites which the great Bishop of all souls, Christ Jesus our Lord, did institute.

Before the settlement of such farmers had been accomplished, the Church, with commendable promptitude, had thought of the need of the heathen Mashonas. Even before the Company had sway in these regions, attempts had been made to send native evangelists from Zoutpansberg to the remote Banyai; but the mission proved abortive. The proud and bloodthirsty Lobengula swayed the fate of the Mashonas, and his murderous impis traversed their land from time to time, rifling the homes and kraals, and butchering all the inmates that were useless for their purposes. The result of his impis coming in contact with the Company's forces is now a matter of history; utterly crushed, the name and terror of the Matabele despot belong to the past. The Gospel cause, held in the balance whilst the wild heathen raged in Matabeleland, is now having widespread victories, and the peaceful pursuits of agriculture and commerce are now found where formerly it was impossible for the white man to appear. This is the blessing brought on by the crushing defeat of Lobengula and his warriors. Mission stations are springing up under the wings of various denominations, and amongst these the mission work of the Dutch Reformed Church at Morgenster, in the Victoria district, is taking a prominent place. There we have a missionary, a medical missionary, and a mission-farmer, together with seven native evangelists, occupying stations from the river Lundi to the regions near Charter, and the Sabi in the north.

The Church had been mindful also of the religious needs of the white members. Four years ago two of our ablest ministers, the Rev. Mr. Stegman and the Rev. Mr. A. Hofmeyr, were deputed to go to those northerly regions on what may be termed a prospecting mission. They were to visit the farmers in Mashonaland and report what was to be done for the religious needs of our people. A well-equipped expedition was carefully prepared, cordially supported both by the Church and Mr. Rhodes, and the members of that expedition returned to the Colony six months after with one, the chief of the party, left behind in Johannesburg; the pioneer minister of our first Church efforts amongst the whites *gave his life*.

As soon as the report of the surviving minister had been placed in the hands of our Church, fresh efforts were made, and after some fruitless attempts to induce ministers of experience to undertake the work, a highly-talented brother, the Rev. P. Nel, was ordained to proceed to Mashonaland to start the Church work. He laboured indefatigably between Victoria and Salisbury, and was forced to give up the work partly on account of fever undermining his system, and partly on account of the Matabele War. The work was brought to a sudden standstill, and left in abeyance until the Synod of the Church did meet in 1894.

At that General Assembly it was resolved to take up the work once more, to select a minister with or without a family, and to call upon the colonial congregations for support. Early in 1895, after private attempts to induce younger ministers to proceed to Rhodesia had failed, the Moderamen openly appealed

to the patriotism of the ministers to come forward and offer the services of which the Church was in need. This appeal made me respond before the Mercy-seat to go forward, if required, and be of service to those sheep that were without a shepherd, moved with compassion to see them wandering about full of spiritual and temporal infirmities. It so happened, when, during the middle part of Lent, I was reading the 6th chapter of Isaiah, that I exclaimed, in answer to the question, "Whom shall I send?" "Lord, send me." I repeated this feeling to a brother minister, and the result was that a few days after the official offer was made to me. I received it on Friday evening, the 1st of March, requested the Moderamen to meet me on the 6th of March, placed the matter before the Kerkeraad of Wynberg on the 8th of March, and on Sunday morning, the 10th of March, at the conclusion of the service, announced, to the astonishment of many friends, that I intended on the last day of that month to deliver my farewell sermon, and give up the old-established comforts of the most cultured parish of South Africa for the pioneer work that might fall to the lot of a Dutch Reformed minister in Rhodesia. How hard it was to perform this resolution will appear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEPARTURE.

IT was indeed not an easy matter to carry out this resolution. During the twelve years of my ministry at Wynberg many engagements had entwined their endearing and engrossing influences around me. I found that it required more courage to sever the ties that bound me to my several engagements than to have made up my mind to face the difficulties of mission work. On commencing, as a first duty, consequent on my publicly declared resolution, to write out resignations, I found that not less than *twenty-three* offices had to be vacated in the Church, the parish, and the State. I wrote out as many as I could, directing them to the various bodies with which I was connected; but when it came last of all to the position of Chairman of the Board of the Public Schools, I had repeatedly to ask for grace and strength to perform the task. That I had taken no small share in the development of public school life in the suburban parish the following documents (of which an abstract is given) will show.

The Lady Principal wrote to the Board:—

I understand that, at the meeting of the Board this afternoon, Mr. Strasheim will tender his resignation as Chairman.

May I ask if you will kindly convey to him, at the meeting, my most sincere thanks for the help—often at great sacrifice of time and effort—which he has afforded me as Principal of this school. He has never hesitated to do his utmost to lighten any trouble or to remove any difficulty which has come to me in my responsible position here.

I have also to be most grateful to him for much personal kindness from time to time shown to me, quite apart from my connection with the school. It gives me much pleasure to recognise to the Board these obligations under which I am to the retiring Chairman.

The Superintendent General of Education wrote, in response to my resignation as Chairman of the Boards of the First Class Public Schools :—

That Dr. Muir has learnt your decision with the greatest regret, and desires to express to you his hearty appreciation of the constant interest you have taken in educational matters at Wynberg, and your faithful and most successful services in connection with the management of its Public Schools.

The Secretary, on behalf of the Girls' Public School, wrote :—

The Managers of the Girls' First Class Public School, Wynberg, have accepted with very great regret your resignation as Member and Chairman of the Board, and have desired me to convey to you their very great appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the said school for nearly eleven years. They have passed the following resolutions: (1) "That in the resignation of the Rev. P. A. Strasheim, the Members of the Board are conscious of, and deeply regret, the loss of one of their associates, who, for nearly eleven years, say from the starting of the school, has, with credit to himself and advantage to the school, filled the very important position of Chairman of the Board of Management, and therefore tender him their best thanks for the great good he has done in behalf of the Ladies' Seminary, Wynberg.

"They wish him every success in the very important duties he has undertaken in accepting the appointment made by the Synodical Commission of the Dutch Reformed Church of South

Africa to organise and establish congregations among the scattered members of their Church in Mashonaland and Matabeleland.

(2) "That this Board unanimously resolves, that the sum of £100 be placed at the disposal of the Chairman (Rev. P. A. Strasheim) with the thanks of the Board for the services he has rendered for education at Wynberg, and the Ladies' Seminary in particular, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Rev. P. A. Strasheim."

Before closing this letter, allow me, as Secretary, to tender you my sincere thanks for the able help and assistance afforded me during the nearly eleven years we worked together; you never hesitated to do your utmost in lightening any trouble or removing any difficulty which had come in my way.

My prayers are that you may be sustained in health and strength and be very successful in the self-sacrificing task you have undertaken on behalf of the scattered members of our beloved Church in the far Mashonaland and Matabeleland. God be with you!

Quickly did these last weeks pass. Friends had to be seen for the last time, members to whom the Word of Life had been preached for so many years in God's House and the parish homes, the sick and the afflicted—all these, the aged included, had to be visited for the last time. From early morn till late at night I was engaged in this very sad work. It was then I realised how deep the affection was which God's poor and the sick entertained towards him, the weak servant, who had from time to time, in the name of the benevolent Physician of souls, entered their homes to relieve their wants of soul and body for Christ's sake. Many a time I had to pray for strength silently, to shake hands for the last time, and tear myself away from the proffered embrace or parting kiss. I hope it may never be my lot again to go through such mental trouble as was experienced in those last weeks of March 1895. Added to this exciting leave-taking, I

had to unshelve my Lares and Penates. The library had to be brought down; the mottoes, which had so often given me fresh strength when, weary in mind and body, I had come home from my rounds of mercy, and which seemed to mourn that they were no more to impart courage and devotion from the treasured wall-spots to which the eye had grown accustomed instinctively to turn, were laid aside. Arrangements had to be made for a temporary home at Wellington for my wife and children, from whom I would soon have to part, as all of us thought for at least three years; the last Feast of Love had to be celebrated with the congregation, whose steward I had been so many years in the husbandry of God, and at last the solemn preparations took place in the closet to say the last words in God's House to all that wished by their presence to hear the final message that had to be delivered in the name of Christ. It was God's wish that I should bring to that congregation the Apostolic benediction contained in 2 Cor. xiii. 14, as my last wish for their future welfare. In tears and words of love the benediction was pronounced for the last time to a flock, in whose midst there had been much of silent and open prayer that they might be made perfect in Christ Jesus. In response to this benedictive address the Senior Elder requested me to come down from the pulpit and receive the following address, accompanied with a handsome sum of money to be used for my comfort on the impending journey and mission tour:—

Reverend Sir and Respected Pastor,

With feelings of deep regret we heard of your resolution to terminate your labours, of nearly twelve years' duration, in our

midst, in obedience to a call to attend to the spiritual wants of our scattered co-religionists in the interior of Africa. We feel it incumbent upon us at this time to express our appreciation of your work in our midst.

You have preached to us the Lord's word and will continually in faithfulness, earnestness, and love. The sick and dying were faithfully visited by you; you were a source of comfort to the afflicted. Wherever you knew poverty to exist you offered relief with advice and aid. You have made great sacrifices for the congregation at Wynberg; you were indefatigable in doing good to others.

You have always shown meekness of spirit; and your walk in our midst was after the example of Christ. With reference to education and teaching, you have done more than the congregation could ever have expected. At a time when the lambs of our flock, especially the young daughters, were obliged to attend schools of other denominations for their instruction (which frequently brought about wrong impressions in their religious habits) you were a promoter in the erection of the Ladies' Seminary. The Victoria Cottage Hospital and the Boys' High School are additional proofs of your zeal exhibited in our midst. We hope that the ties which have connected yourself and the congregation, now dissolved by the inscrutable design of the Lord, will remain to exist in spirit.

With full conviction we wish to testify that more than one of the congregation feels broken-hearted by your departure from our midst.

Your wife was always at your side and assisted you in the comforting of the sick, in the creating of our prayer meetings, and the arrangements for our annual bazaar. As you have done here what your hand did find to do, and the Lord hath called you to another sphere of labour in His vineyard, we will not open our mouth but rest in the will of the Lord.

Receive our best wishes for your future. May the Lord grant that the seed scattered by you may not be blighted, but bring forth fruit for Eternity!

The Lord bless you and your home, and crown your future career with blessing and prosperity; may He gird you with fresh courage and strength to perform the new task with honour. May He safely conduct you to your new sphere of labour; may He be your rod and your staff at all times. The Lord bless you

and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Kindly receive a small present from the Kerkeraad and congregation as proof of our indebtedness to you for what you have done to us. Use it as you like, especially to make your journey to the Interior as comfortable as possible.

In the afternoon I had to take leave of Christ's lambs. I addressed the Sunday-school children on Ecclesiastes xii. 1. The opening hymn was touching to the core, commencing with the lines freely translated—

“Here on earth is pain and sorrow,
When we hail the parting morrow.”

However, the Master gave grace to let the lambs feel for the last time that it was right to remember the care-taking Creator and Preserver, to accept the loving Saviour, and to be consecrated to a life of holy service by the sanctifying Spirit.

A touching address, read by the Superintendent, accompanied with a handsome Bible, brought the parting with my lambs to a painful close.

In the evening I took leave from the mission or coloured congregations. Although, as explained in the previous chapter, this congregation had its own minister and spiritual government, my connection with it, as minister of the parent congregation, had been of such an intimate and endearing nature that it was felt to be my duty to meet them in the parent church building. There was hardly room for standing; so full was the building that several stood at the doorways outside to hear the last words. With a congregation listening with rapt attention, deeply attached to me, although I had not been their pastor,

it was a heavenly hour as I spoke in simple language what my heart did feel for them from the sacerdotal benediction contained in Numbers vi. 24-26. Their minister rose at the conclusion, and in very felicitous words presented me with an address full of appreciative love, and a wish that I should purchase something as a "keepsake" from a sum of money handed to me at the close.

With a few days' stay and leave-taking from intimate friends I left the parish to put my temporary home in order elsewhere before my final departure, promising to return a few days after to receive the final farewell from the Wynberg public in the shape of an address, read to me by the Chief Justice at the close of the last meeting of the Board of Managers of the Wynberg High School, over which I had had the honour and pleasure to preside since its establishment. The address, signed by the foremost men in the suburbs, was as follows :—

We, the undersigned, feel that we cannot allow you to leave Wynberg without giving our testimony to the excellent work which you have done for the advancement of education in this neighbourhood.

We would refer in particular to the establishment of the Girls' Public School in 1884, and the High School for Boys in 1892, both of which schools owe their existence to your foresight and energy.

The public are greatly indebted to you for the great administrative ability and untiring zeal displayed by you as Chairman of their respective Boards of Management.

We would also refer to your valuable work on behalf of the Victoria Cottage Hospital, and to your general interest in all other philanthropic undertakings.

After this I disappeared from the scene of public life in the suburban parish, thankful to my Redeemer that His work had been well appreciated by all for

whom I had prayed and laboured and still do pray. That I was not yet forgotten by these Boards after my departure is shown by the following extracts, taken from the subsequent Annual Reports of the Public Schools.

The Boys' School Board remarked :—

"The Board of Managers regret to state that the Rev. Mr. Strasheim, after doing excellent service to the school as Chairman since its establishment, has resigned owing to his departure from Wynberg for another and wider sphere of labour. His place as Chairman has been temporarily filled by the appointment of Sir J. H. de Villiers."

And the Girls' School Board stated :—

"The Managers cannot close this report without referring to the great loss this Institution has suffered through the departure of its former Chairman, the Rev. P. A. Strasheim. His zeal and untiring energy have been of unspeakable value. To his devotion to the cause we, in large measure, are indebted for the existence of the Institution and its present prosperous and satisfactory condition.

"We would tender him our heartiest thanks for the work he has done, and express our sincerest hope that God may abundantly bless him in the work he is now doing in the far north."

The Managers of the Boys' High School had, on a previous occasion, passed the following resolution unanimously, it having been moved by the Chief Justice, Sir J. H. de Villiers :—

"In accepting the resignation of the Rev. P. A. Strasheim, as member and Chairman of this Board, the members desire to record their appreciation of his valuable services and devotion in the cause of education, and more especially in the promotion of the interests of this school, and they wish him every success in his future career."

My thanks are recorded in these pages to those whose kind feelings prompted them to think in his absence of one who loves them still.

CHAPTER III.

OFF TO PRETORIA.

BEFORE I could leave Wellington I had still to be formally installed as representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in Rhodesia. This happened in our Cathedral Church in Capetown, in the presence of the Moderator, and many of the Brethren of my Presbytery. I had for nearly thirteen years been clerk to that Presbytery, and it had been the wish of its Chairman that as many as could possibly be present should bid me farewell. It was not possible for them to be in Session at the time, and so no resolution of their feelings for me could be taken; but in October last year, whilst I was in Gazaland, the Nestor of the ministers proposed, seconded by the senior minister of the Theological College:—

“This meeting is desirous of expressing its appreciation of the great and manifold services rendered by the ex-scribe to this Presbytery, and rejoiceth on account of the blessed work which he is now performing in Mashonaland. The meeting testifieth to its continued interest in that work, and prayeth that the blessings of Almighty God may rest upon him.”

It was carried with acclamation.

In the midst of a large assemblage of friends and ministers I received my charge from the Moderator, the Rev. Andrew Murray, and having taken leave with a pulpit address on Acts xviii. 21, I went my way to Rhodesia a few days after, accompanied by a young missionary and a servant, to start the work upon arrival in that far-off land where we had heard that the harvest truly was plenteous, but the labourers few.

There are three roadways to the land of Cecil Rhodes. Two are partly by rail and partly by coach; the third is over the sea to Beira, and thence by river, boat, and rail and coach in successive stages to Salisbury. The first leads *viâ* Mafeking, through the land of Linchore and Khama, Mr. Chamberlain's great friends; the second goes *viâ* Pretoria and Pietersburg. Both lead to Buluwayo. I had resolved to go by the middle road and on my way to break journey at Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State. Whilst at the latter place I had the honour to conduct Divine service in the morning and evening of the Lord's Day, and my appeal for help in this undertaking met with a hearty response from minister, kerkeraad, and congregation, several of the high state officials, amongst them the Chairman of the Volksraad, Mr. Fraser, taking a foremost and most liberal part.

Having taken leave of these dear friends, I boarded the train at the station, where I had the pleasure of meeting the newly consecrated Bishop of Mashonaland, and cementing the first bonds of friendship in the common cause of Christ's kingdom. We met each

other again at Pietersburg in the Transvaal, both on our way to the far north to look after the interests of the churches we represented.

Whilst in the train I heard several remarks about officious train and customs officers on the Transvaal railway section, and amidst all warnings and gloomy forebodings of impending trouble I could only afford to smile or pretend unbelief. I had taken the precaution to wear every article of my little stock of clothing, and had invited an official of the Transvaal Customs to come to my home, to whom I showed the contents of my trunks and portmanteaus. I had requested him to inform the head officials of my approaching visit to the territory of Oom Paul, and that I would come armed with a double-barrelled gun and 1,000 cartridges. I knew that this gentleman had given the required notice, and also that the very urbane and kind heads of this department would cause no trouble. Moreover, I had obtained a special permit from the chief traffic manager in Capetown to have my gun and ammunition conveyed with the same train in which I was travelling. In Bloemfontein I had received the greatest consideration from the officials, and, armed with these credentials, I thought it utterly impossible that a cloud of trouble could be gathering at the Transvaal terminus.

Everything went on merrily and prosperously until we came to a small station near Johannesburg. Here we had to go into other carriages belonging to the Netherlands Company. I had paid the full first-class fare from Vereeniging, the first station on the Transvaal border to Pretoria, and the Company's

officials put me into a SECOND-class carriage which was already over-crowded. When I remonstrated, I was informed in semi-Dutch accents, mixed with words from the Queen's English, by one of the officials "zat he vas wery shorry." When I again remonstrated in the Dutch language, I was politely told that if I wished I could stand in one of the carriages, as there was no other sitting room. I saw it was no use arguing, and so submitted.

Whilst walking about on the platform, with two or three minutes still at my disposal before the departure of the train, with my gun under my arm, I suddenly felt a violent pulling at the lower part of my gun. I turned round and faced a slender little official at the early hour of dawn, when the following conversation took place.

"What's this?" said the official.

"A gun," I replied.

"Have you paid the duty?"

"No; but I am willing to pay whatever is due."

"You must give up your gun."

"No, never. I will pay what is due. Tell me, how much is it?"

"You must leave the gun behind—I will send it on this afternoon. You have no right to carry a gun without a permit."

"All right—tell me what I have to pay. Besides, don't you know that I am allowed to travel unmolested, as far as customs dues are concerned, until I reach Pretoria? Did you not get notice from your head officer about my arrival?"

"Oh—oh—are you the Rev. Mr. Strasheim?"

“Yes, I am. How much have I to pay?”

“Well, you see, I cannot enter into that now. There’s no time for that, as the train must leave. You must give security yourself for” . . . (I forget the exact amount), “and two other sureties for another sum” (it was mentioned). “You must sign several papers; so you had better go to Pretoria, and leave your gun.”

“I don’t intend leaving my gun behind,” was my firm reply. “I will settle at Pretoria”—and, suiting the action to the word, I walked into my carriage; and as the train started, at that very moment, I heard the little officer shout to the guard in Dutch that certain luggage was to be held in “*durance vile*” on arrival of the train at Pretoria. From the description I knew it was mine, and, whilst I tried to find a seat in the little second-class cabin, I thought over the pleasant surprise which there would be in store for me as long as I had not met my friends in the head office.

We went on with a small but powerful engine in front of the train, and at about eight o’clock we steamed into the Pretoria station. During our journey I had the pleasure of being closely surveyed and questioned by my *vis-à-vis*, a strong and yellow-eyed Boer. Having asked me how old I was, whether I was married, how many children I had, what I was doing in his land, and whither I was going, he commenced talking about the brave deeds at Bronkherstspuit and Majuba, and their War of Freedom. I let him talk on until he came to the cause of his present independence, and when he ascribed it to

many causes, other than the real ones, I ventured to inform him that, next to the help of Providence, he was to remember that he was dealing with a strong but magnanimous nation, and last, not least, that it was owing to an influential deputation, consisting of the Moderator, Assessor, and Senior Theological Professor of our Church, together with the Hon. J. H. Hofmeyr, that waited on Sir Hercules Robinson and induced our Governor to advise the Gladstone Government to be lenient and yielding in the terms of peace. At the same time, I told him how wicked it was of the Transvaal to treat our Colony with thanklessness in having taxed our products up to the hilt, and that the day might come, if they were in trouble again, that they would not enjoy the help of the Colony if they continued in that work.

"Well," said my friend, "I agree there with you. The other day they came to me, asking me to sign a petition to the 'Raad' for putting a tax on pears and apples, and I refused."

"Why did you refuse?" I rejoined.

"Well, don't you see," was his reply, "I know that, if once these things are taxed, I have to pay a higher price for them, and I like to have them cheap, for I am fond of fruit."

I turned my head in disgust out of the window. I saw it was "self and pelf."

Well, we had come to Pretoria, and I was quickly at work, assisted by my fellow-traveller and servant, to put our luggage outside the carriage. I had just finished this, and was about to look for the customs officer, when I found a little "brief authority" had

forestalled my intentions and walked up to me with a telegram in hand, and asking me in rapid suecession whether I was the minister that wouldn't give up the gun at Elandsfontein, and a whole series of questions about permits and contents.

I told him quietly, "I am that minister, willing to pay unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's." I showed him my credentials, the permit from the chief traffic manager, and a list of contents, at the same time proceeding to unlock my trunks and unstrapping my portmanteaus. After having satisfied him about everything, he suddenly started "the gun," and told me all about a number of documents, wanting to stop my ammunition as well as my gun. I informed him that I would pay at the head office, and that notice of my arrival had been duly given, whereupon he graciously allowed my luggage and ammunition to pass. As he promised to put my gun into the safe, I gave it up; but, before parting, I said that there was still something I had not mentioned, and on which I had to pay three per cent. duty for transit.

"What is that?" he asked eagerly.

"A bag of Cape tea—bush tea," I replied.

"What is the weight?"

"About thirty-five pounds, I believe."

"What is the value?"

"Twopenee farthing the pound," I rejoined. "Please calculate three per cent. on that value, and I will pay it." "Never mind," was the disappointed reply, and then parted, promising to see each other's faces again before the chief officers that morning.

I was on the point of ordering my luggage to be

carried to a cab, when a little man, with a red band round his cap, rushed up to me in an excited state. He had heard that I did have the audacity to carry ammunition in the train. "What right had I to do that?"

I showed him my authority, remarking that it was in English. My friend of the customs here helped me, and told him that I was not to be blamed.

With a furious avalanche of words, he made me understand that such an illegal thing would not be allowed again on *his* line, and having quietly informed him that he might go to Capetown and fight it out "at a *price*," I left the angry official and shook my head in astonishment with the thought, if men well-armed with credentials and of reliable status had to experience this, what might it not be with men unknown and strangers to the land!

Shortly after this I met the very courteous and gentlemanly head officials, who released me from all further trouble about sureties and papers, and, having paid Cæsar's due on the gun and ammunition, I parted from my young "brief authority" on very good terms. I found to my great relief that the wagon sent to us from Pietersburg had arrived that very morning, and so we proceeded to go to the merchants and lay in our stock for the long journey.

CHAPTER IV.

TO PIETERSBURG.

It took us nearly four days to prepare our wagon. In the meantime we were most hospitably entertained by the pastor and inhabitants of the Dutch congregation at Pretoria. Throughout our ramblings we have been the recipients of good treatment and encouraging kindness. The wagon was left in charge of Rev. Mr. Groenewald, my assistant, together with a son of one of the elders of Pietersburg acting as driver, a native leader, and my servant. I remained behind to conduct Divine service on the ensuing Sunday.

Having preached to large and attentive audiences on the Lord's Day, I left on Monday morning very early by cart to overtake the ox-wagon at Hamman's Kraal, and shortly after I reached that place we took up our respective positions in the wagon which was to be our home for a considerable time. The first impressions I had of this mode of travelling were not unpleasant. The first night I passed in the veldt was one of considerable anxiety to me; but this feeling soon wore off, and I commenced to feel at home in my field clothes even more than in the sombre cloth.

The gun I had received as a present from Mr. Rhodes

proved very useful. Shortly before the wagon left Pretoria I had instructed my young brother to buy meat for the road. When I came to him he told me that, having made repeated attempts at the wayside places, he had not been successful in obtaining a single pound. I myself longed for something better than bread and biscuits, and so I thought of supplying myself with what I could get together of the winged birds and the fleet hare and buck. Many years ago I did remember that I had shot a few birds, but I had never succeeded in bringing down a partridge or a hare. I felt very nervous about my success now. Before leaving Pretoria I had wired to an intermediate stage, hoping to be able to reach it in time to meet a brother minister who was proceeding from Nylstroom to Pietersburg. I soon saw that it would be impossible to accomplish this within the time allowed me by him in his reply. We had, therefore, a rather serious condition of affairs before us—to remain without meat for seven days. I had never liked vegetarianism, and my system could not exist on bread and rice and tea. So I commenced to practise firing at trees and other targets for a portion of the first afternoon, and, as I succeeded in hitting pretty accurately, I availed myself of the remaining hours of the afternoon to bring down some partridges and pheasants. We had sufficient for our dinner the second night. The third night was also supplied in a similar manner; and when after dinner we had started on our evening “trek,” and the moon shone with brilliant calmness, I succeeded in knocking over a few hares that were crossing the road for the neighbouring trees. The

anxiety for meat was now at rest ; we could enjoy our remaining portion of the road to Pietersburg. Now and then a wild dove or partridge, coming too near the wagon, was brought down, and we spent the tedious hours of travelling in reading, walking, and making plans for the future spiritual campaign.

I had been making enquiries on the way about places we had to pass, and was told that we would pass through a very large Kafir stadt. We supplied ourselves at Piet Potjieters Rust in the local shop with what we required, and took a special look at the mountains where in bygone years the hero-pioneer, Potgieter, had given his life for his fellow-beings in assisting to break the power of native chiefs or punishing the natives for treachery and murder.

This little place was so called because it is the locality where his grave is found. Continuing our way we were anxiously looking forward to come upon the large town of Kafirs, and we, who had never been before where Kafirs do congregate in large numbers, but had heard that one has to be specially careful about them, as they have not all a precise and adequate knowledge of the *meum et tuum*, were making all sorts of plans as to precautionary measures that might be necessary to adopt should they venture to exercise their ingenuity in appropriating to themselves at our expense what was not their own.

The next day passed, and also the night. We travelled through the greater portion of the night, and were told when all came to rest that we had reached the great Marabastadt. We dressed ourselves, and whilst Mr. Groenewald was diligently repairing the

hind wheel of the wagon, which had come to grief, I longed that the heavy mist which screened everything around might clear up that I might feast my eyes on the great Kafir town. Slowly did the mist roll away, and gradually the surrounding landscape rose to view, but we saw no Kafir huts. For all I know it may be still there, but I never saw it.

Later on in the afternoon my good brother told me a fine story about this place, where I saw a house which served as hotel. There was a time, he said, when there was another building there, which was used for Divine worship, and as there were then already two parties, exactly the same in doctrine and standards, but bearing a slightly different name, these people commenced to argue at last on the subject, "To which of the two parties the building might belong." So they resolved to come together on a certain day, and amicably and piously to settle the dispute. As the building had been made of iron plates and wooden supports, all fixed with screws, a happy thought had struck some one that it would be better to solve the problem by enforcing the motto, "Possession is nine points of the law." Thereupon he and a few others came together on the night before the meeting was to take place, and, armed with serew-drivers and other tools, they proceeded, in the stillness of the night, to unscrew whatever was fixed in the aforesaid manner, and to pile up most devoutly on the wagons drawn up alongside whatever had been thus unscrewed, and, after everything that could be unfixed had been thus reverently put on the wagons, they ordered their oxen to go forward, and no one knows

up to this day whither the sacred building may have migrated. When the good people opened their eyes next morning, or had come to the place of meeting previously appointed, there was no church building any more, and no need for further debate as to whose these things might be.

Having finished the repairs of our hind wheel we went forward, passed the farm of our mission brother, the Rev. Mr. Hofmeyr, sent word that we were going forward to Pietersburg, and having shortly after met the Rev. Mr. Coetsee, minister of our Church at Pietersburg, who had come to meet us with his spider, we felt very happy, for within an hour we were cosily and hospitably entertained in his home, where we spent a fortnight almost, waiting for the adjustment of final arrangements that were deemed necessary by experienced friends before we would go forward, as we thought, to a land of barbarism and wild animals. This was the most northerly congregation of our Church, and once out of it we would roam over the bush veldt and get into the fever belt of the Northern Transvaal. The days passed by quicker than we desired, for the friendship we enjoyed was sweet, and the company of our brother and his home most refreshing.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE WAY TO TULI.

WHILST at Pietersburg we had received many indications of friendship. Two or three homes had vied with each other to prepare for us so many good and useful things that we could hardly find room for them in our wagon. The beloved veteran missionary of our church work at Zoutpansberg was there, and his advice was golden, for he had been more than twenty years living and moving about in this northerly congregation. He left the village a few days before us, and we arranged to meet at a midway place called Kalkbank, where the last post-office is to be found in that direction south of the Limpopo.

The wagon went forward on the 20th of May in a heavy shower of rain, and I remained behind to overtake the wagon on the following day with the spider and horses of my friend, the minister of Pietersburg. On the previous Lord's Day I had, as on the Sunday before, conducted Divine worship in our church building, and in the evening service I had the pleasure of speaking to a highly-cultured audience. It so happened that the time for the Circuit Court had drawn nigh, and this brought down, in addition

to an array of legal luminaries and witnesses, the learned Chief Justice of the Transvaal. His lordship, with several of the local dignitaries, were present, and at the close of the service, whilst I had been commended to the care of Almighty God by the whole audience in a beautiful versified prayer, the Rev. Mr. Coetsee, in a few well-chosen and happy sentences, charged me and my brother Groenewald to go forth to work in the far north for the extension of that Kingdom which had no bounds.

On the day when the wagon left I was invited by the Chief Justice to come over to his hotel and enjoy a pleasant evening at his table. The Landdrost, a very genial man, and Mr. Coetsee formed the other guests. I accepted the invitation most cordially on condition that I might be allowed to appear in travelling dress, as I was no more *in clericalibus*. This having been allowed, when the evening shades prevailed we sat together, and the reminiscences of old college days (the Chief Justice and myself had been fellow-students at the S. A. College) were reverently and appreciatively brought before the little gathering. We parted in the happiest of feelings. Although our professions had not become alike, each one was trying to do what good he could in the sphere in which God had placed him; the Chief Justice having made an indelible mark not only in the legal world, but also in the prosperous advancement of the Transvaal's political status. Having promised that he would with interest follow my doings in the northern lands, I shook his hand with as much warmth, and even greater, as when we parted on the day when,

as young commilitones, we bade adieu to each other outside the portals of the Athenæum's classical surroundings.

The next day we took leave of the dear home in which a few very happy days had been spent. It was genuine throughout; it was replete with marks of sincere attachment; we had cast anchor in each other's hearts, and no union effected around the Mercy-seat in the Master's name can ever be broken. With inadequate expressions on my part for all the kindness I had received, I took my seat in the spider and sat pondering in silence for some time alongside of my good and warm-hearted brother. For more than two and a half hours we travelled along, the horses of our friend Mr. van Soelen being in the team, and would have gone on, unconscious of the time and the parting which shortly after would have to take place, discussing difficulties that might be happening and that might not be happening, had it not been for an incident that suddenly made us stop the horses and get out of our seats. I had been observing an unpleasant smell, as if something was on fire and, when we looked round we saw "how great a matter a little fire kindleth." My coat was burnt right through; the back cushion was burnt through—damage had been inadvertently caused by the carelessness of smoking in the open carriage. The mischief was soon overcome; we resumed our journey and, as the wagon soon came into sight, crossed the Blood River and halted together at a wayside inn, where we prepared our dinner and entertained our guest as well as we could.

After our meal, having commended each other to

Divine protection, we parted with sad feelings and—I am not ashamed to state it—with a flow of tears. Somewhat prophetically my friend had remarked how joyous and happy I would feel if, on my return, *one day* I could come over the same roadway exulting in the triumph of success. To me it seemed as if that day was “far distant.” Who could have known then that, six months after, the initial work of the official task would have been completed, and a church and school-building, with teacher and classes, waiting for an assistant in it, stand out as bold testimony of the love of God in a town where, until September, 1895, not even a congregation had been started?

Being now left to ourselves, and rain threatening us, we went off a short time afterwards on the road to Kalkbank. We had a native leader with us—a convert from the Mission Station at Zoutpansberg, who rejoiced in the name of Ishmael Nari, or, in more intelligible sounds, Ishmael the Buffalo. He was fully acquainted with the road, and early in the morning was before his oxen, bringing us to the farm of Commandant Vorster, where also Brother Hofmeyr, our veteran missionary, was waiting to take leave of us.

Commandant Vorster was just ready to start for the scene of war. Magoeba, a recalcitrant Kafir chief, aided in private by the wily and powerful Magato, since deceased, had not been crushed during the campaign of the previous year, when Malaboeh had been removed from his impenetrable boulders with great loss of life and laudable energy on the part of the Transvaal forces. The farmers had caused a series of small forts

to be built around his mountain at the outskirts of the Woodbush, a huge forest, where one may truly put up the words of Dante: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." From these forts occasional sallies were made to keep the Kafirs within their natural boundaries and prevent escape. When the proper winter season had arrived, the burgher forces reassembled to punish this chief and put an end to his murderous depredations for ever. The contingent of the Zoutpansberg farmers required for this force was already on its way to the scene of war, and the worthy old warrior at whose home we had now come was on the point of following his burghers. We parted soon after; he to go to a most successful campaign, and I to go to a land unknown to us, and almost without mark of parish work as far as our Church was concerned. In the afternoon Brother Hofmeyr collected all that could be found on the farm, and conducted a prayer-meeting on Psalm cxxi. I had often read it—yea, preached from it. I had often encouraged others with these beautiful words. But now I and my party had to be encouraged. The solemn moments spent on our knees in the dear Commandant's house, the simple and trustful dedication of our lives and work to Him who never slumbereth or sleepeth, will ever be remembered. Full of gratitude and faith in the Father's guidance and protection, we embraced each other and bade good-bye, perhaps never to see each other's faces again. We shook hands and bade adieu to everything that civilised life could give us, to turn our faces upon the reality of desert life. Our wagon proved to have received fresh gifts from the dear

friends of Kalkbank. We shortly afterwards came to two roads—the one to the right leading to our Mission Station at Zoutpansberg; the one to the left with the words on the sign-board, “Road to Tuli. Plenty of water,” told us in so many unmistakable signs that it was our road, to lead us to death or victory.

We had been repeatedly cautioned, as we were leaving Pietersburg, to be careful not to halt at night-time between the mountains of Malaboeh and Magato. We arrived there at about nine o’clock in the morning, and prepared to continue our journey in the afternoon. The unsettled state of the natives that were fully armed on Magato’s side, and the impoverished state of the natives that had survived the Malaboeh campaign on the other side, made it extremely impossible to allow an “otium in pace.” The oxen had been allowed to graze for some three hours, and the leader had been warned to be ready at two o’clock with his oxen. When two o’clock came the order was given to inspan, and although the leader was diligent in his search, the oxen could not be found.

It so happened that our leader had made me the confident of one of his heart’s secrets. He had been unexpectedly engaged for this work at Pietersburg, whither he had come to prepare his outfit for marriage. His young lady lived near the mountain of Malaboeh, and Ishmael desired very much to see her before he went far away to explain to her why he could not fulfil his promise and intentions at that particular time. I told him it was unwise and highly dangerous to stop there longer than was necessary,

and that he might send a note to her when the oxen were grazing on the river side. Ishmael had been very near Magato's Kafir huts at the foot of his mountain, and when the oxen were last seen they were going in the opposite direction to Malaboeh's mountain, where my lady resided. If the oxen had not turned up for the night, he would have gone there and seen her who was dearer to his soul than all other human beings. I do not wish to say that this was done premeditatedly, but still it would have, if successful, given him an admirable chance.

As the oxen did not turn up at 3.30, Mr. Groenewald took the track, or "spoor," of the oxen and went along to see if they could not be found. Not having returned at five o'clock, when the sun was near setting, we heard a loud noise as if someone was in great danger and appealing for help. My boy, who was not very brave at the best, thought at once that my good brother was in danger of his life; in fact, he thought the Kafirs had hold of him, and that he was shouting out to me for help. A short time afterwards we heard a low, gurgling sound coming from some depths; and my servant at once said that he could distinctly hear the flow of blood, and that the Kafirs were cutting Mr. Groenewald's throat. He implored me to allow him to take a gun and cartridges to go to the rescue; but as I was more afraid that he would shoot himself than be of any assistance, if required, against the Kafirs, I refused permission. It was getting late and we could now and then see Kafirs armed with assegais in the bush on the right-hand side of the road. This made

matters look serious; and just as I was going to order my boy to bring out the guns and some of the ammunition, and teach him how to load and discharge a rifle, the oxen came out in the open minus Ishmael, but with our energetic missionary behind them. We were saved; we could inspan and leave the hostile quarters. We afterwards received an explanation of the difference in the sounds of his voice. At one time he had been on the top of a tree, and shouted that the oxen had been found; at the other, he had been in a deep river course, through which he was hurriedly driving them back to the wagon. The footprints of a little Kafir boy were found behind the oxen, which were going in single file straight in the direction of Mr. Ishmael's beloved's abode.

We went on at full speed, and came to Brak river that night. The next morning we resumed our journey, broke the pole of our wagon in the afternoon towards sunset, and drove away after having effected the necessary repairs, until we came to a place called Tatsane, where we remained over to enjoy the rest of the "Lord's Day." When the Lord's Day came, I found that we were in company with some farmers who were bringing goods to Victoria and Buluwayo *viâ* Tuli. I invited them to come to my wagon and attend Divine service which I wished to conduct. All but two came, and we had a very hearty service, with a high and broad mimosa, giving us shade, behind us, and an ant-hill serving as a desk for my Bible and hymn-book to rest on. I spoke on Exodus xxiii. 25. The service was refreshing.

We started at sunset, as we were bound to seek

fresh water. The little hole from which water had been drawn was just a fit receptacle of fever bacteria. I had been drinking freely of this water, not knowing where it had been got from; and during the night I had my first attack of fever. The next day we rested, and I had to resort to my medicine chest freely. I did not then know that it was the dreaded malarial fever which I had experienced in a mild form; but as it recurred three times afterwards whilst in Rhodesia, I got acquainted with my enemy, and became more familiar with his peculiarities and system of attacks.

The day after we struck the Limpopo, of which we had heard so much, and we had the pleasure of drinking fresh water once more. Whilst out shooting, I met with an instance which I have only seen recorded once before. I was on the banks of the inner stream and saw a large pheasant sitting under a tree. I took aim at once, and was just going to fire, when I saw the bird opening its wings and uttering a peculiar sound. This arrested my finger for a moment, when I saw little ones rushing towards her. I was aiming all the while, and when the little ones were under her wings, she put her head under the foremost wing feathers and sat quivering over her young ones. I lowered my gun: it was impossible for me to shoot that bird, and I allowed mother and young birds quietly to run away for their lives.

The day after I witnessed what vultures could do. An ox of a carrier, just about two miles ahead of us, had been left on the side of the road, down with red-water. The "aasvogels" had been attacking the poor beast whilst still alive; when I came near the scene,

his head was still more or less erect, resting on one horn, the part behind the shoulders was disembowelled and the flesh torn off the bones. The blood was fresh and warm still. The vultures must have caused intense agony to the suffering brute ere it died. On the 30th of May we crossed the Limpopo, assisted by one of our farmer friends. We had now found company, and we travelled along with their help, they assisting us at all the difficult places of the road and helping us through the broad, deep and rapid Crocodile river as well as they could. On the 1st of June we crossed the Shasha river near Tuli camp, assisted by a Mr. Oosthuysen, and just as it was getting dusk and we had with difficulty got on a little plateau and were scanning the horizon in all directions for the township, our young friend remarked, with a gesture which betrayed intense surprise, "Behold Tuli!"

Yes, it was difficult to see it, unless our eyes rested straight on the place. The few huts and houses are separated by the Shasha, with a ford about 800 yards broad, and this first township of Charterland, being only a military post, was small in our eyes. We beheld Tuli, only to get more fully acquainted with it, during the next three days, before we ventured on our second stage—Victoria.

CHAPTER VI.

VICTORIA.

WE were just going past the hotel on the Victoria side of Tuli, when a policeman walked up to the wagon with the question: "Whose wagon is this?" Having been informed who the proprietor was, he approached me, and asked me for my "pass." I told him I had none, that it was Saturday night, and would get one on the following Monday. He wanted to stop the wagon; but as I told him that I did not wish to remain there, but go a little further nearer to a plot of grass, he insisted on my having a "pass." I then informed him that I had a "pass" of the big chief in my pocket, and that I would show it to his chief on the following Monday. When the name of Mr. Rhodes was mentioned, and he knew who I was, more latitude was allowed and I could go whither I liked. As it was, my wagon had gone further in charge of the leader and driver; and by the time I came to it, the oxen were already being fastened to the wagon for their night's rest.

I had previously sent a message to the inhabitants of Tuli that I was willing to hold an English service if they desired to have me, and repeated my offer to the policeman; but although I waited the following

day till eleven o'clock, no one turned up, and I had an audience consisting of *two*, the members of my own party. I had the courage to go on with the service. It was Whit-Sunday, and my text was Zechariah iv. 6—"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The words proved singularly prophetic of the mission; truly we were the essence of powerlessness; and the good work that resulted from the mission was all God's. In the evening we walked over to a little camp of farmers who were on their way to Buluwayo, about two miles to the east of Tuli. We had heard of their presence during the day, and had the pleasure of being heartily welcomed by them. After a short evening service, we parted and returned to our wagon. In the evening we had a surprise visit from Dr. and Mrs. M., who were on their way to Buluwayo. They promised us their support if we should come to Buluwayo, and we had the pleasure afterwards of seeing how well this promise was fulfilled by the good lady when she helped at a stall at our bazaar.

The next morning I crossed the Shasha river once more, wading about "knee deep" through the stream, and presented my credentials to the genial magistrate, Mr. Longden, who is now in the district of Melsetter. He explained to me that it was impossible to collect an audience the previous day, as there were only a few men who were all on duty, and several of the inhabitants were down with fever. Having assisted me, although it was a public holiday, in everything that I required, and supplied me with the needed "pass," I took my leave of his worship, and went

back to my wagon to prepare for the start on the following day.

From this place I telegraphed to the head of our Mission Station at Morgenster, near the Zimbabwe ruins, to send me fresh oxen, as mine were getting exhausted. I also engaged a transport wagon to take over the greater portion of my goods, to relieve my team as much as possible. In the meantime Mr. Groenewald gathered as much information as he could collect about any members that might belong to our Church. Late in the evening he returned with the news that there was only one solitary member. He had been in deep grief, by reason of domestic affliction; but as soon as my young assistant commenced consoling him, he informed him that he was comforted already, as the magistrate would, in a few days, bind him to a second consort. This one had been obtained from a locality to the south of the Limpopo, known for its deserted aspect, where very few whites come, much less a minister of the Gospel. On our making enquiries the next day from these people, who had meanwhile come with the transport wagons, we were told not to entertain any grave apprehensions about the future wife's feelings in the midst of a civilised community, "for the good man had sent on his daughter in a wagon to fetch the second mother, and 'tame' her for her future sphere of life." As the Civil Commissioner had told us that there would be no prospect of starting any work there for years to come, if ever, we prepared to start at noon on the next day for the township of Victoria.

To accomplish this we had to go over a distance of two hundred miles. We passed the Steyn's family, where we had been on the previous Sunday evening, took a hearty leave, and were soon on our way. We descended from the plateau shortly after from a precipitous hill, accompanied by the transport wagon we had engaged. We had heard of other wagons that had gone the previous day, and did our utmost to overtake them. We knew that they were piloted by an experienced and kind-hearted transport rider, and as we had heard a great deal about lions and tigers prowling about in that region, we were desirous of joining him for the sake of guidance and protection. It was only late at night on the third day that we succeeded in our efforts.

We crossed several rivers, but they were mostly dry. One, however, the Umzingunni, was very broad, but had a small stream of water. Here we saw what the river could be when it was full. The road did not cross in a straight line, but lay at an angle of some thirty degrees to the Tuli bank. We could not cross it with our own oxen; but obtained help from our friend of the transport wagon. Once over we had to ascend a very high and precipitous bank, covered with tall trees, and watched some few hours after how other transport riders who were overtaking us were trying hard with double spans of oxen to struggle over. In the evening we continued our journey in the moonlight, and kept along the only open road till it was time to pitch our tent for the night's rest. The next day we witnessed a boar-hunt. The wild boar was coming down to the water, some

three miles from the road, and one of our party just allowed him to have a drink, when he received the fatal bullet. He ran off still for a considerable distance, and was found expiring in a thicket through loss of blood. The boar proved a valuable source of food to my transport rider and his friends. I could not relish the meat at all.

Having overtaken our friend, Mr. W. Thompson, we had comparative ease and tranquillity for the rest of the journey. We followed in his leading, and he always gave us sound advice, his good wife helping us with many things, and supplying us every day with fresh milk. On the Sunday morning we were at the Bubyas, a river in three streams. This was a place reported to be infested with lions; but we never saw one, nor heard the roar of any. We had Divine service in the morning, and my text was Psalm xl. 1-3. In the afternoon my assistant had a children's service. In the evening we had a short service at our wagon. The next day we started again, and when it was daylight, we saw from the footprints in the sandy road that there had been lions and tigers. Our pilot remarked to me that it was a singular thing for him to witness that he had had no trouble of lions and tigers during all the time he had been with us, whereas on former occasions, in passing over this same road, he had to make all kinds of precautionary arrangements to protect his cattle. I informed him that every night a prayer was sent up to the Throne of Grace, imploring our Heavenly Father to shut the mouth of the lion, and blunt the teeth of the tiger, that we might lie down in peace, covered by the

Almighty's wings. I ascribed our safety to the protecting care of Him who did send His angels to watch over us, that no harm might come near us. My friend looked at me, and replied, "Yes, it must be so." It was most strange that, although the footmarks occasionally would show how they had been all around us, and wagons behind us complained that they were often in great danger, we never heard a tiger grunt nor a lion roar.

Two days after this we came to Matipis. Here we found a deserted wayside shop-building, and huts which had formed the camp of the Company's police in former days. Everything in the shape of wood or metal had been taken away by the thieving natives around. The place lies between high granite mountains, and has a central Telegraph station, without any occupant. It is about midway between Victoria and Tuli, and is occasionally used by telegraph officers to find out where there may be any defect in the line. Behind the telegraph house, we saw a graveyard, where lay the remains of six men who had nearly all died of fever. It was a sad tale we gathered from the plain epitaphs. Young men and middle-aged men lay there awaiting the day of resurrection, and they reminded us of the hardships and trials and sacrifice of pioneer settlers.

Having passed a missionary, who lay ill of fever in his wagon in charge of natives, on his way to Pietersburg to be married, we went forward with the usual halting at various parts of the day and night. The next morning we came to the Nuanetzi river, where an incident occurred which is worth recording.

The river has very steep banks, is fairly broad, and had still a strong stream of water running in its middle course. This water, coming over rocks, gives the wagon and oxen much difficulty in coming through. The rocks are extremely slippery; and if you chance to slip off the central bed of rock, your wagon will land in deep pools of water, from which no ox can extricate you, as the wheel turns against a massive rock-wall. Our pilot's front wagons had come through safely, when our wagon was ordered to have its turn. We had hardly gone on to the slippery rocks, when our wagon landed in one of these sidepools, and as our oxen struggled along, the result was that our last pole broke. We were now in great distress, and our good friend at once ordered our wagon to be dragged out backwards, and at the same time had a new pole brought to us made of very tough mimosa wood. Whilst the wagon was in this plight, and Mr. Groenewald was fitting in the new pole, my transport wagon was ordered to cross, and I was advised to take my stand in this wagon. There was only a small portion of the wagon's floor on which I could stand; but there was a large packing-case on which I could place my hands to give me support whilst crossing. When we had got fairly into the middle of the stream, and the wagon was tossed up and down over the slippery rocks, I held on as well as I could. I found that my weight was balanced by a much heavier weight in the case, for it appeared that this was the temporary abode of a heavy, fat, and bulky pig. My weight pressing down on the one side, and Mr. Pig's weight pressing down the forward

side, the result was that, when the wagon went through the process of upheaval and sinking, the packing-case broke in twain, and the pig was thrown forward, and I in the other direction. With the yelling driver and the bellowing oxen in front, the screaming pig and the agitated Bishop behind, this formed such a ludicrous scene that those who witnessed the proceedings had ample scope for fun. It will never be forgotten by me.

The repairs having been effected, we started the same day, towards evening, and the following day met a strong force of natives, armed with all sorts of weapons. The old "blunderbuss," the old "Sanna," which seemed to have been forgotten, came on the foreground once more; the old "flintlock," and the long-discarded "Enfield," with a single "Martini-Henry" as the exception, were carried by these natives; the assegai and battle-axe and the "knob kirrie"—everything was in the show, except weapons of modern warfare. They were followed shortly after by the Native Commissioner and a few policemen, and were on their way to punish some chief, who had been negligent in paying his hut tax. One of our company remarked, as they filed along in irregular order, that he might "string up" more at a time by one rifle bullet. They were not of a martial description; but I suppose that the Mashona is so cowed down with abject fear at the sight of an armed body, that any display of human beings, armed in the most fantastic manner, is sufficient to make him give in.

The next day we were approaching the Lundi. The oxen had come from our Mission Station to meet us,

and the boy had brought our batch of home letters and papers. On receipt of these (we had not received any since the 19th of May), the lantern was lit, the wagon closed, and the early hours of the morning had long appeared, when still our appetite for news was unsatisfied. How true it is: "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Having crossed the Lundi, surrounded with the most luxuriant of tropical vegetation, but as fever-productive as enchanting, we spent the Lord's Day with solemn services. There was now a large caravan of wagons that had come from the North and South. In the morning there were two services, held simultaneously; one for the whites, and one for the coloured retinue. I spoke to the former on Acts viii. 39, the last words (we were separating from each other the next day), and my assistant spoke on John iii. 16. In the afternoon there was Sunday-school for the little ones. In the evening we gathered for the last time around our camp fire, and spoke to the native who had been sent from the Mission Station to drive on our loose oxen. We urged him (through an interpreter) to abandon his pagan habits and accept the Saviour, when the following colloquy ensued:—

"You have more than one wife. Why is that so?"

"I have three wives, and I have the ambition to get ten."

"The white man has only one wife, that keeps him within bounds. Follow his example."

"The white man has come into my land to take away my cattle and my wives."

“No, he has not. Look here, I have left my wife and children behind far away from me to come and visit you and my white people. See what a sacrifice we are making. Only I want all the white men and the black men to accept the Saviour.”

“What, did you leave your wife behind? . . . Well, if all white men are like you, I will watch for three years, then I will also become a Christian.”

I spoke a few words to him on the great love of God, and how the white man was God's messenger to teach the heathen and sinners to live a pure life, and he seemed quiet after that; when, after a pause, he said in an emphatic tone, “No, Umfundisi (minister), there are white men who steal our daughters, and defile our wives, and rob our cattle, and who drink fire-water.” I told him “We did not.” He nodded assent, and repeated his promise given above.

How that truthful reproach from the heathen stung me! “O God, make all white men exemplary in their conduct, and let them be true witnesses of Christ to the heathen,” was my silent prayer.

Whilst on the road I quickly observed something going on near one of the transport wagons which deserves mentioning. It will show that, however poor some of our Dutch whites may be, there is a foundation of religion in most of them. Two white youths were preparing their principal meal. I had often supplied them from my camp table; but this time they were doing their own mess. They had some boiling water into which a certain quantity of flour was poured, stirring it with a stiek till a kind of

porridge had been formed. Salt was added to it, and afterwards sugar; then some strips of dried pork were put on the coals, and when everything was finished, the senior lad dished up the porridge and pork in two plates. The younger lad looked wistfully at each ladleful that was turned over into the plate, for he seemed hungry. When his plate had been handed to him, he seemed impatient to go on; but at a sign of the older one, he took off his hat, they both reverently closed their eyes, and folded their hands, and I heard the senior one pray :

“ Bless, O Father, what we eat ;
Let us never Thee forget.”

And in my heart I reverently responded :

“ Lord, this never I'll forget.”

On the day after, we departed. Having taken leave of our company, we went speedily along, for the strong and fresh oxen of Mr. Louw trotted quickly away with our wagon. Within fifty-four hours after leaving the Lundi, we were at the Mission Station, having passed through one swift and broad mountain stream, the “Toqua,” a tributary of the Lundi. We were heartily welcomed. Two of the party were down with fever, one lady and the Doctor, but our presence was to them, and their presence to us, a source of grateful joy.

Two days after I left with Mr. Louw for Victoria, where I found our people waiting for me, eager to welcome their minister, and show him in every way

that they fully appreciated any sacrifice he might have made on their behalf. My stay in their midst was prolonged for nearly a month, taking all measures in the meanwhile to initiate the Church work in their midst. They numbered only fifty-three souls, and were too few to start a congregation.

CHAPTER VII.

FEELING MY WAY TO CHARTER.

HAVING made all arrangements that were required for a constant work amongst our people at Victoria, and performed all that was needed in dispensing both Sacraments and Confirmations with the usual services, I informed our members that I would return in November. In the meantime I had also shown my credentials to the Acting Civil Commissioner, who was most kind and obliging to me. With profound regret I have since been informed that he is no more in the land of the living. Shortly before my departure my people handed me a purse of money which had been collected from both English and Dutch residents in the township. This proved a great blessing to me, for living is pretty expensive. My thanks were expressed at the time, and I availed myself of this renewed opportunity to thank all the inhabitants of Victoria for their kindness. They treated me with courtesy and respect, and all hailed my mission with delight.

I had gathered all possible information about the farmers living towards Charter. I could only obtain the names of two or three, and these were Maritz, Potgieter, and Ferreira. The night before I left I

heard incidentally that Mr. Maritz had been murdered by Mashonas. Mr. Ferreira's farm was on the road to Buluwayo, and so the only one left was that of Mr. Potgieter. The road from Victoria to Charter is an open one, well-defined, and our Morgenster brethren had given me all available directions. But it was *men* I was looking for; and as these do not live close to the main roads, I had to *feel my way to Charter*. Unacquainted with the native language, I could not get any information from them. All I knew was to ask for water and to bring wood for fire. But the principal landmarks were duly noted down, and so we left Victoria on the 17th of July at 4 P.M., trusting to the guidance of Him who had been so faithful hitherto.

We had taken a native leader from Victoria who was not the most praiseworthy of men. He did not fully understand his duties, or he tried to shirk them as much as possible. He was an adept in telling falsehoods, so sunken and depraved has the Mashona become. He also proved to have wrong notions about the rights of "mine and thine." It was no use expostulating, for he could not understand us; so after we had gone fifty miles further he quietly left us in broad daylight, necessitating each one of us to take an extra share of duty. In addition to this, one of our oxen got ill, so that I myself had to drive in a couple, whilst the others were attending to the wagon.

We tried hard to find, first of all, the farm of the late Mr. Maritz. Whilst at Makouri, where we were hospitably received by Mr. Coole, we had received advice about taking a certain road. When we came

to the "Old Column Road" we found afterwards so many different roads that it was impossible in the darkness of the evening to find the true road. We went on till late at night, and halted to have rest. It was the Lord's Day when we rose from our slumbers, and we longed for a communion of saints. We did not know where we were, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could. Mr. Groenewald walked back a distance of seven miles, but could not find any road or house, and so we resolved, when it had grown dark already, to proceed further northwards. At about ten o'clock in the morning I distinctly heard the tune of one of our psalms. On the return of my companion, I heard that he had not sung the tune. I told him that either we must be near a farm where a Dutch service was held, or else we must be near some wagon of one of our people where the tune came from. The sounds came with sweet effect from above, and we listened with rapture to the strains until they died away. A few months afterwards we heard that they had come from the wagons of one of our friends, Mr. R. van Rooyen, of Victoria, who was about one or two miles away from us, without our knowing anything of each other at the time.

We felt the want of water very much, and the want of grass. The natives are in the habit of setting fire to the grass at various points, thus robbing the travellers' oxen of their pasturage. Black patches were visible all around, and water could only be obtained from stagnant pools. In spite of all these obstacles, the Lord brought us through safely. Just a week after we had left Victoria we came to the home of

Mr. Shawe, Altona, to whom we had a letter of introduction.

With the information obtained at this place, we went forward once more in a south-westerly direction, in quest of Mr. Potgieter's farm. We went that night and a portion of the next day, until we came across the road from Charter to Buluwayo. A little distance from that road brought us to a very sweet and extensive plot of grass, with water in the lower parts. Here we halted for the day, eager to find out where the farm might be. After many unsuccessful attempts to "spot" the place, we resolved to wait. Having left our needs in prayer before the Mercy-seat, we calmly and resignedly waited till about 2 P.M., when we resolved to go in different directions to see whether we could obtain some indications of the place. About half an hour afterwards I saw something bright in the distance, moving, and reflecting the sun's light in different directions. I at once surmised that this must have been caused by some one carrying a gun, and not long after I saw a human being emerge from the forest that covered the opposite hillocks. I felt inclined at first to fetch my gun, but, as I was too far from the wagon, I went on. A few minutes later and I could plainly see that the human being was smoking, and, not long after, that he was a white man. We now acted for some time the part that Robinson Crusoe and Friday went through when they saw each other. Then my friend would move very quickly and stop with a suspicious look; and then I again would do the same. At last I stood still, and my farmer friend walked up to me and said—

"Good-day. Who are you?"

"Good-day," I replied.

"You can't be a smous (pedlar), for your wagon is too small; nor a transport rider, for you have too good a jacket on; pray, who may you be?"

"I am seeking souls that are lost—to bring them the blessed tidings of salvation."

"Oh, you are our Predikant!" (minister). He reverently took off his hat (old man as he was), took my hand, and burst into tears. "We have been expecting you, and my friend Potgieter and I have already been making plans to fetch you at Victoria. Very welcome, sir."

"Then what is your name, old father?" I rejoined.

"My name is De Kleuk."

"And where does Mr. Potgieter live?"

"Not far from here, sir. I will bring you into the road that leads straight to his farm. There is my farm." He gave me his glass, and there I saw the building made of grass and clay, and a corrugated iron roof.

Not long after, under the piloting of our venerable farmer-friend, we were on the way to Hartebeestlaagte, the farm we wanted. We crossed the Umyati, where we had fresh water again, at about 5 P.M., and just as the sun was setting we came to the farmyard, where we were received with great heartiness and kindness. That evening I had an attack of ague; but a plentiful supply of warm tea, blankets, and quotations from Psalm xci. brought me to sweet, very sweet repose.

The next morning I rose early and set to work.

Announcements were sent round to the farmers that Divine service would be held on the approaching Sunday, as also daily services throughout the following week, to be followed by Confirmation and the celebration of Holy Communion. This announcement brought a little host of farmers and their families to the farm, and they brought also their sick and infirm to be healed. As I looked on that little crowd I felt somewhat of what is recorded by St. Matthew: "But when Jesus saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

Able assisted by my young companion, who prepared the candidates for Confirmation and conducted some of the services, I succeeded in preparing a members' and baptismal register. After the Communion services we had a meeting of the members, and promised them a return visit in November, when we would settle the question of the creation of a parish. Meanwhile, a site for the future village was selected, and, having done what could be done, the people went to their homes, and I with my party returned to the main road.

It was a beautiful moonlight evening that assisted us on our departure. We came into the Umyati-ford at about nine o'clock that evening, where the sand was very heavy. A fresh ox that we had bought from the people seemed to be out of his place in the team, and this resulted in a dead "stop" when we got into the block of sand. No whipping or other means would persuade this new ox to go on, and, con-

sequently, the other oxen refused to go. After much worry we got through at last, and halted some three miles further on for the night. The next morning brought us to Enkeldvorn, the farm of Mr. Ferreira, where we were hospitably entertained, and from which place we determined to set out for Buluwayo.

CHAPTER VIII.

BULUWAYO.

WE were now going south-south-west. All this time we had been pursuing a northerly course, but now it seemed as if we were going homewards. It was a strange sensation at first, and the oxen somehow seemed to think they were going home, for they never refused to go through rivers or sand after this. We went on slowly, and felt that it would be a long and tedious journey to go over the 180 miles. We were taking in many respects a leap in the dark; for if we had received scant information in fairly-explored Mashonaland, much less did we know about Matabeleland. Still we thought it best for several reasons to go to Buluwayo. We had heard at Tuli already that the township was large and flourishing, that many farmers had proceeded in that direction for settlement, and that we would most likely be able to meet with the Administrator, Dr. Jameson. As I wished to obtain a sphere of work for Mr. Groenewald as soon as possible, I felt that the capital of Matabeleland would be the best for that purpose. Having frequently made this a subject of prayer, I felt that I was right in making this move. Subsequent events proved

that it was the right move, and one made at the most opportune moment.

We passed Sebaqua, Ironmine Hill, and Gwelo in the course of a week, and, finding insufficient water for our oxen at the latter place, we went on till, some three miles further on, we found a little. We saw drilling going on and heard target-firing for some time, all on the Lord's Day. As Bishop Gaul was reported to come there shortly after me, I resolved to leave the township to him and set out for the capital. The oxen were now too slow for me, and, as the coach came past in the early morning, I resolved to go along with it, leaving instructions for the wagon to come up to Buluwayo as soon as possible.

It was a strange experience to go through at first, to sit in a coach drawn by mules, accustomed as I had become to oxen. Not all the company proved very attractive. There was one who broke the Third Commandment repeatedly without any cause, and who showed great lack of refinement. We went through the day and the greater part of the night, and arrived at Buluwayo at three o'clock in the morning. Some one belonging to the coach had promised to obtain lodgings for me, and when we came to our hotel he informed me that there was no room. I was then told to go to another hotel, when the same information was given. My luggage was put down with me in the middle of the street. A gentleman, Mr. T., and myself tried two or three other hotels, and the reply we got invariably was, "No room." These words struck me with peculiar force, and I thought how awful it must be to the poor soul who will once knock at

higher and more sublime portals, and obtain the response, "No room—you cannot enter now."

Well, what was to be done? As I was discussing our position with my fellow-traveller, we happened to bring the thought forward—What a sacrifice had been made in leaving Wynberg and to find oneself utterly unprovided for in the middle of a Buluwayo street on a dark night. A policeman walked up to us and said—

"Oh, you come from Wynberg, do you?"

"Yes," I said, and I mentioned my name.

"Oh, sir, I know you well and used to know your predecessor. How is it possible you could have left such a comfortable home for this place?"

"I come to look up our scattered members," I said.

"Well, sir, there is no room in this place. But let us try"—and he proceeded to go with us once more to get lodgings. But everywhere it was "No room."

"Well," he said, "you can't remain in this cold night air—you will get the fever. Go with me to the police-station, and you can sit there till it is daylight."

I declined the offer for obvious reasons. We happened to see a little dim light in an office. We ventured to knock. It had a boarded floor. The door was opened. We stated our needs. A kind voice replied that we were welcome to lie down till the morning, and we might try again. And so amidst bags and luggage, and what looked like a sack of potatoes, "I laid me down and slept, and I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." The next morning I got

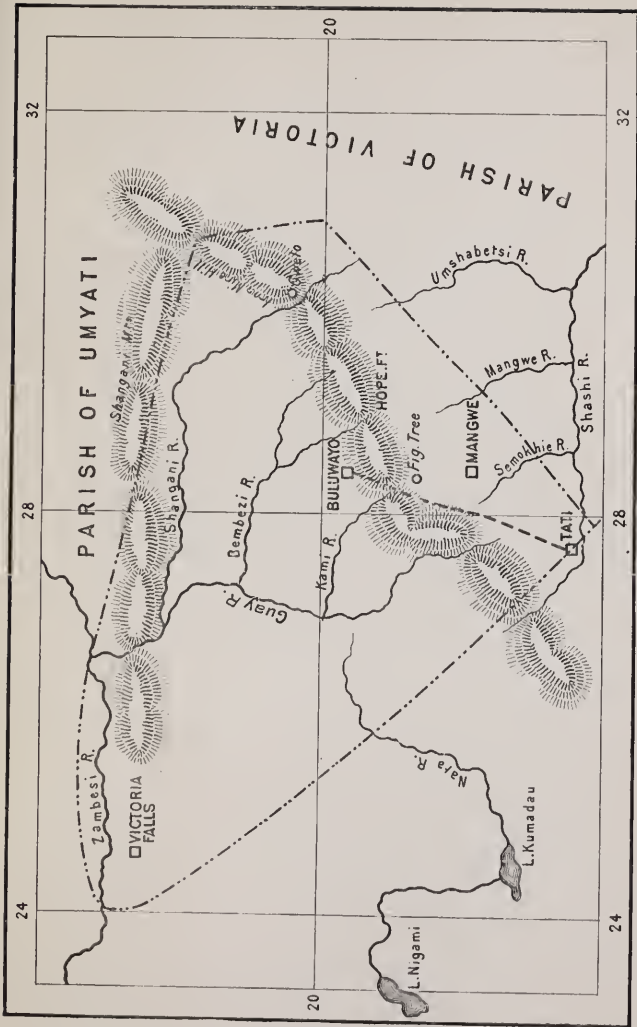
a cup of coffee from a Kafir boy, and a small space in a bedroom where I could change and dress. In clerical dress I repaired to the office of the Civil Commissioner to present my credentials as soon as possible, and ever since that hour the mission succeeded with leaps and bounds. The first thing the obliging Civil Commissioner did was to secure me a proper room in one of the best hotels; and, once comfortably settled, I secured an audience with the Administrator on the following day.

The Administrator was no stranger to me. I had met him in Capetown in March shortly after his triumphant career in London, where he had lectured under the presidency of the Prince of Wales. He wanted no formal introduction; extending his right hand, he welcomed me most cordially. I at once plunged into *medias res* by telling him what the object of my visit was: I wanted Government assistance for schools. I wished to have aid for teachers' salaries as well as buildings. Having gone through the details of my scheme as quickly as possible (for there were a dozen others waiting to see the Doctor—a matter which Colonel Rhodes rather forcibly brought to our notice when my visit seemed too long to him), I received the reply with a wicked little smile: "You draw up a scheme for my consideration; ask for as much as you want, and I will give as little as I can." I need not add that I lost no time in drawing up a scheme, asking as much as I could possibly want for schools; and, having seen each other from time to time, altered and enlarged our scheme according to mutual satisfaction, it was submitted to the sanction of Mr.

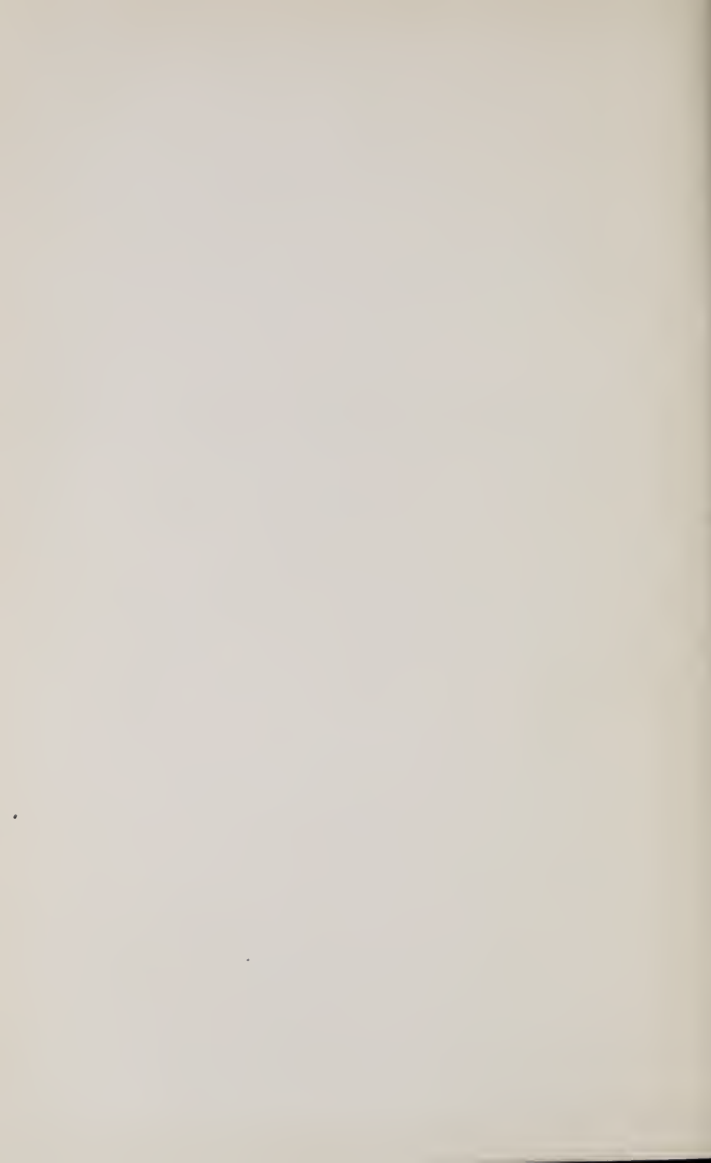
Rhodes, and having been ratified by him it received our signatures on the 31st of August, 1895. The result of this was that we opened our first school at Buluwayo on the 1st of October, 1895, and at present already require an assistant. Four or five other schools will, please God, ere this book is printed, be opened in Rhodesia and Gazaland, all under the flag of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Administrator has given me the impression of having a rough exterior, lined with kind and sympathetic feelings. He is a thorough business man; quick to see what is wanted, able to help without sacrificing principles. He has nobly helped me in my efforts to extend the work of education in our Church in the land over which he held sway. At my last visit, when I told him that I was going to Gazaland, he warmly bade me good-bye and wished me all success in my work. He lives in the hearts of the people of Rhodesia and Gazaland. He is brave and warm-hearted, still fond of his professional duties when he walks through the hospital wards, and an able ruler.

As soon as this work had been accomplished I set myself to the formation of a congregation. I had meanwhile held several services in a room of the Exchange buildings, then again in the tent of the Good Templars, and Mr. Groenewald had been helping me in various ways. When we came there we found our people in a state of terror, as some unfortunate advocates of Adventism had disturbed their minds about the end of the world being near. I quieted them at once, and, when they saw that I would have nothing to do with these men of error, they left them

in the lurch, the result of which was that the "would-be" clericals ceased to trouble them any longer. On the 6th of September we started our first congregation, installed elders and deacons, set the school work going, made the first preparations for a bazaar to be held on my return, entered into a contract for the first school-building of our church, saw the foundation trenches dug, and then took my seat on the 17th of September in the coach for Charter, leaving the church work in charge of my faithful and willing assistant, who had to carry out in details what had been initiated during my stay. The first congregation of our church, of the limits of whose parish a sketch is annexed, was set afloat to undergo its "storms and calms."



PARISH OF BELUWAYO.



CHAPTER IX.

TO THE NORTH-EAST.

WHILST engaged in the settlement of the Buluwayo parish, I had made arrangements to go to distant Gazaland, and visit the members of our Church who were living between Charter, Salisbury, and Umtali. The Government had shown me their liberal help in providing me now and then with a free seat in the coach, and so I could travel at quicker speed. The proprietor of the coaches, Mr. Zeederberg, showed me his willingness to help by allowing my luggage to go free. Yet, as the time for leaving approached, I felt somewhat sorrowful. It was no easy matter to go on a long journey through wild and uninhabited places all by myself. And then the thought of non-success made me shudder! I did not wish to be busy in the Master's vineyard without producing fruit. Our people had met with many reverses and losses in coming over from their southern homesteads. How would they receive me? Just as I was thinking over these saddening thoughts, a letter was found amongst my batch for the day, just brought from the post-office, bearing the handwriting of my beloved Senior Theological Professor Hofmeyer. His words of encouragement and approval of what had been done

gave me fresh zeal, and after a solemn prayer I left with the conviction that God would safely see me through everything, and that, after all, it was not *my* work but *His* work that I was doing. In this mood I took my seat in the coach, where I found thirteen other passengers, the majority of whom were going to Gwelo, where a land-court would be held to settle land and mining disputes. There was a fair sprinkling of lawyers and speculators and witnesses, the Postmaster-General and his valet, and last but not least a poor mother with two children.

With this living freight and the dumb freight of our luggage, we went certainly not fifty miles an hour. It was a tedious process as far as Gwelo. I pitied the poor mother, and so did a very generous-hearted soul, whose name I cannot mention, but who was for ever warning his fellow-passengers not to come too near his foot, as he was suffering from gout. The driver, over-fatigued, simply hid himself and let us stand in the middle of the road, and was found afterwards, when a diligent search had been instituted, amongst a lot of forage bags, fast asleep. We got him on to his box again, and at the next station he told the highest postal official that he would upset the coach, and so, in the interests of human life, it was deemed prudent to let him have his sleep. The large number of passengers rushed to the neighbouring huts for beds, and, as I was at the back of the coach, I found myself shut out and compelled to "sit it out" till daybreak in the coach. On the evening of that new day we arrived at Gwelo, disembarked our litigious passengers, and went our way rejoicing with the balance of souls and

luggage. We slept that night, and with fresh strength opened our eyes next morning at daybreak at Ironmine Hill. The breakfast there offered did not look very inviting, and so I satisfied myself with biscuits and coffee—a thing of which I did not feel sorry afterwards, as one of my fellow-passengers suffered from intense pain in the stomach.

That evening we arrived at Umyati, where a very fair dinner was offered to us, and two cups of Fry's cocoa completely refreshed me. The mules after this did not prove to be the very best. They kicked, and sometimes lay down in the road; broke the harness, annoying the poor driver terribly, making us proceed very slowly, and causing us to arrive at about five o'clock the next morning at Charter. Here I remained behind, having arranged to conduct Divine service for several Dutch families who lived in that neighbourhood.

When the Lord's Day came, I was terribly disappointed. The members who had arranged to be there were still on their way from Salisbury and did not put in an appearance. It so happened that several wagons came from an opposite direction on Saturday evening, and the majority of their occupants were induced by me to remain over. I had an audience of about a dozen and a half; but I was consoled by the thought that where "two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The services over, I left the next morning for the farms on horseback, resolving to intercept the coach at a place called Marandellas, some fifty-three miles to the east of Salisbury, on the way to Umtali.

Whilst visiting the farms, somewhat refreshed by the very good table which is kept at Charter, I received an offer from one of my young friends to go with his ox-wagon to Marandellas. On the Monday and Tuesday I held services for the dear friends, who did everything in their power to make life pleasant to me. I enjoyed sweet hospitality with the Bezuidenhout family. We arranged to leave old Mr. Bezuidenhout's farm on Wednesday morning, having ample time to cover the distance of about thirty miles in two days.

Before leaving Buluwayo and Charter, I had made a special study of the time-table by which the arrival and departure of the coach from Salisbury to Umtali is regulated. It was distinctly stated that the coach would leave Salisbury on Friday morning, arriving at Umtali on Saturday afternoon. This was confirmed by the time-table exhibited at the post-office at Charter. I thought of travelling at my leisure, believing that there were two clear days during which the distance might be easily traversed. As it was a beautiful evening, my young friend proposed that I should allow him to go on with the oxen through the night; and as I preferred that to travelling at day-time I acquiesced. This proved to be a most opportune direction of Providence, as I will show. By this night travelling, we reached Marandellas on Thursday, instead of Friday afternoon, twenty-four hours before the time advertised, as we thought. As soon as we had come to the place I went for a walk along the newly-planted telegraph poles connecting Salisbury with Umtali. I had hardly gone a length

of half a mile when my young friend came running up to me, and exclaimed that I was to come as soon as possible, as otherwise I would miss the coach. At first I could hardly believe what he said; but on going to the wayside place, I was politely informed that the coach would be there in a few minutes, as the order had gone forth that week from headquarters that the coach was to leave Salisbury in future on Thursdays instead of Fridays. How thankful I felt for this manifest direction of our Heavenly Father. If I had missed this coach, as there was only one a week, I should have had to remain at Marandellas another seven days. I should have arrived at Umtali a week too late, have waited there a week in vain; for the guide that had been sent from Gazaland to meet me at Umtali, with a number of Kafirs to carry my luggage, was there at the appointed time, and he would have left again, and all the expense and sacrifice would have proved futile, and the Lord's work in Gazaland left in abeyance. How wonderful are the directions of Providence! His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts.

Having taken my seat in the coach, I found that the Government authorities at Salisbury had taken care that some one should make me feel at home. Captain Turner, the polite and popular magistrate at Umtali, made me feel quite comfortable, and saw on my arrival at Umtali that I was safely lodged at a very quiet hotel, the Central Hotel, where one receives very good treatment and a very clean bed. We arrived at Umtali the next evening at about ten o'clock, having covered a distance of 103 miles in

about twenty-six hours. We should have arrived there sooner but for an accident on the road, the breaking of the front part of the coach, the repairs of which kept us waiting for some two or three hours.

Whilst on my way from Charter to Marandellas, we passed through a large swarm of locusts. I had frequently seen myriads of them on my way from Tuli to Victoria; but this swarm passed all conception. As we entered a large forest, with the trees on either side of the road, I saw, as far as the eye could reach, every available tree covered from the roots to the topmost branches. There seemed to be no further room for any single locust. Still the swarm was pressing in from behind in prodigious numbers, making a noise as of thousands of distant chariots. We were obliged to protect ourselves, as they flew straight into our faces. Even the poor oxen were in trouble. As far as we could see in a westerly direction the tail end of the swarm was steadily moving forward, trying to find a resting-place for the night. It took us exactly twenty minutes to get through this moving host, and then they were still coming on in dense numbers. Nothing can resist such an invading army: they destroy everything that may be in a garden or in the field; even clothes that are in their way are devoured or perforated. This is the curse of agricultural pursuits in Rhodesia. With a fertile soil, and everything favourable for the production of cereals, nothing can be got as long as this winged army holds sway.

Shortly after we were safely brought to our hotel at Umtali we retired. We did not then know that our

guide from Gazaland had arrived. Thankful for all the kindness of officials and friends, thankful above all to God for His singular and providential guidance on the road from Buluwayo to Umtali, I left the uncertainty of my Gazaland arrangements in His hands with implicit confidence. I had no care for the morrow : God would direct everything after His will and wisdom. I had been taught by sweet experience to say : “ Father, Thy will be done.”

CHAPTER X.

GAZALAND.

I ROSE next morning with grateful and happy thoughts. I felt refreshed, had an excellent breakfast, and retired to my room to attend to my correspondence. I sent up an earnest prayer to the Lord, who, having brought me so far, would not leave me now, but show me how He had made arrangements for me to enter Gazaland. At about 12.30 I proceeded to the local post-office to post my letters, and heard myself addressed in the Dutch language. I turned round, and saw three strong and well-built Free State farmers eagerly coming towards me. They asked me whether I was *their* Minister, and on receiving a reply in the affirmative almost crushed my fingers with their hearty greetings, and made my heart throb with emotions produced by their joyful exclamations. They informed me that the guide sent from Gazaland had arrived with twelve Kaïrs on the previous evening. Having heard that several of our people were at Umtali, temporarily located in huts, whilst they were doing transport service between Chimvio and Umtali, I promised to remain over with them, hold Divine service next day and dispense the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. They eagerly took over a number of

hymn-books and Bibles, and announced to all that were in their reach where and when the services would be held next day.

The next morning we had service under wagon-canvas, spread out in the shape of awning. There was a fair attendance, all seated in front of a little table, which served as my lectern, between two wagons, the walls of our improvised chapel. There was rapt attention, and an eager interest displayed in the proceedings. The mothers whose children were christened beamed with joy. Nearly all had come up; a few had been left with the wagons to look after the cattle; only one farmer had gone home, and turned his back on the service. I am sorry to say that he bore a Scotch name, but happy to say that he was not one of Gazaland. In the afternoon we had our feast of love, and rejoiced to see how all were touched with gratitude that, in an unexpected way, the Lord had enabled them to join their Minister in celebrating the dying love of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Having secured three useful and valuable plots of ground for church purposes at Umtali, a free gift from the Company, I prepared myself for the journey to Gazaland. My luggage was arranged in parcels, and whatever we needed for our comfort was similarly packed, so that each Kafir might not have more than fifty pounds to carry. At about four o'clock in the afternoon we were ready to start, but we did not leave until an hour and a half later. The porters pretended that they were hungry, and that the parcels were too heavy. One of my portmanteaus was bulky, but not too heavy; and as everything is carried on the head,

they fancied that the bulky size made the weight beyond their strength. As to their feelings of hunger, my guide explained that they had been supplied with food for three weeks; but having come to Umtali they had sold all the flour, and exchanged it for worthless articles. They were threatened with the police, and afterwards took up their parcels, seeing that it was no use to argue any longer. There was one extraordinary rascal amongst them, Koonap by name. He was a fine specimen of his race; tall, well-built, intelligent, but sly and aggravatingly impertinent. He was never trusted by me from the start, and afterwards gave us a great deal of trouble, inciting several of the porters, when we were utterly dependent on them, almost to open rebellion.

Well, we made a start a little before sundown. We had beautiful moonlight, and agreed to go as far as the wayside inn in the Christmas pass. I mounted the pony and paced along, accompanied by my guide, Mr. C. van der Merwe, who walked on foot. We had to go about ninety miles up and down precipitous roadways, over high mountains and rushing mountain torrents. Rather late in the evening we arrived at the inn, where we were very hospitably received; but our guide had to go back to urge on the lazy porters. Next morning we started at about seven o'clock, after a long altercation with the Kafirs. They were made to march forward, as we had found out that their story about want of food was a sham. They had still enough left to take them on to the first Kafir town, where my guide promised to procure a fresh supply for their needs.

That day we made very little progress. Although the porters went by a shorter road than our wagon road, and our own mode of travelling was very slow, necessarily so on account of my companion having to walk, we found when we came to the first halting place that the Kafirs were still far behind. On their arrival breakfast was prepared; and after this we resumed our march. We went ahead of them, waited at a river-course for more than two hours, and were obliged to return until we met them. Their excuse was that they had no food. To show how utterly false this was I may state that there were still two or three parcels of flour in their possession. Besides, they had received orders to buy food in the Kafir town through which we had passed, and for which they had received "limbo." The ringleader was asked why he had not bought food, and the sly rogue answered that the people did not want limbo, but beads, in exchange for their flour. With a threat we managed to get them along until we came to some huts, where we resolved to remain over for the night, as a storm of thunder and lightning was rapidly approaching. We managed to get a supply of dry grass just in time for covering the floor of the hut and drawing a sheet of canvas over its roof. Hardly was this accomplished when the rain came down in torrents and the discharges of thunder were most terrific. The water managed to come into our hut in spite of all precautions, and we were obliged to turn over the grass before we could stretch ourselves on it for the night's rest.

The next morning was very refreshing. The fever heat of the previous day had been cooled down by the

electric discharge of the previous night; everything around us seemed full of life, the beautiful birds of all hues and descriptions sang their merry songs; all seemed happy except the Kafirs. They grumbled for about an hour, and we gave them beads at last. The sly Koonap grinned meaningly to his companions. I saw that we had been taken in. He proposed that some of them should go to the Kafirs on the surrounding hills and get food, whilst we might go on; but I interposed and made him understand that all, except two, should go with us. These two might go and barter for the remainder, and we would wait for them at the next halting place. To this he agreed, and he went off. To my surprise I saw that he was armed with a battle-axe and some assegais, and shortly after the other porters also displayed their weapons. I warned my companion to be on the look-out; and as we each of us had a revolver, we were superior in arms to the dozen of them and resumed our march.

We came to the next rendezvous at about ten o'clock. We had our meal prepared, and told the porters to prepare theirs at the same time. They argued for a while, but afterwards obeyed, their excuse being that they had to wait for their "brothers." Having finished our meal and made the others take theirs, we rested for a while; but when it was past noon we prepared for our start. The others would not go. They had to wait and refused to move an inch. We had no sjambok with us, and so were unable to use anything more powerful than words, which had no effect whatsoever. There was nothing else for us to do but to wait. When it was nearly one o'clock, Mr. Koonap and his

mate turned up, and told us a tissue of falsehoods. He had concealed most of the beads, and brought a little food just for show. We now cared very little about them; we saw we were surrounded by lying rogues and gave the order to "hamba," *i.e.* march. Koonap simply laughed. My companion fired a shot into the air, and they all sang out, as far as I could understand: "He is powerless now, he has fired off the charge." They did not understand the revolver; seeing only one barrel, they did not know that it could be used for six shots in turn. My companion fired off the remainder incautiously in a rapid volley amongst the trees. This surprised them for a while; but no sooner did the firing cease than they exclaimed, "Now he is done." I saw two or three take up their weapons in a menacing way; and sooner than it takes to describe the scene I drew my revolver, and held it straight in front of me, urging my companion to reload as quickly as possible. They were held back by my movement, and looked meaningly at me and my companion whilst he went to his bag to reload. Having finished this, we each supplied ourselves with a dozen extra cartridges, and with revolver drawn I ordered them off. They went. Having gone a little distance, Mr. Koonap turned round and proposed that they should take a shorter footpath; we might go by the broad road. My guide then ordered those that carried our food and bedding and coats to go with us, and allowed the remainder to go their way. But he definitely told them that they were to be at a certain spot when the sun was setting. This they promised to do, and he believed them; I did not.

Having our food basket with us we went our way. At about 3.30 we halted again to strengthen ourselves, and resumed our march at four o'clock. We had hardly gone on for a few miles, when the three Kafirs who were with us pretended to be thirsty, and wanted to go back to the river for a drink. They knew that they were near the spot where the footpath rejoined the main road. I saw at once what they intended doing; they never turned up again. When we had come to the appointed halting place for the evening there were no Kafirs. We waited for more than an hour, and my too confiding companion at last realised that my surmises were correct. We were now without food, without anything for our night's comforts.

I had no desire to remain there. I knew that about twenty-two miles further on there was the wayside shop of a young European, and if I could only persuade my companion to go with me, I intended continuing the journey. My horse was still fresh, if my guide would only go on. To my great joy he proposed that we should go on; there was the light of the full moon to enjoy. It was a little past six, and in the cool of evening one does not mind travelling. As we met some Kafirs, who had passed us in the morning at this halting place, we told them, should our men come up, to hurry on, and meet us at the above-mentioned shop. If they failed, we threatened to send the police after them. This was the only course open for us; we were certain of getting food and shelter at the shop; here we might have to wait till next day and remain without anything. We

marched on, and just as my watch showed twelve o'clock, we had reached Mr. McAndrew's huts. Although he himself was suffering from a bad attack of fever, he entertained us most hospitably. We had tea and eggs, and getting over a fresh attack of ague myself, I slept soundly on a comfortable bed made of blankets.

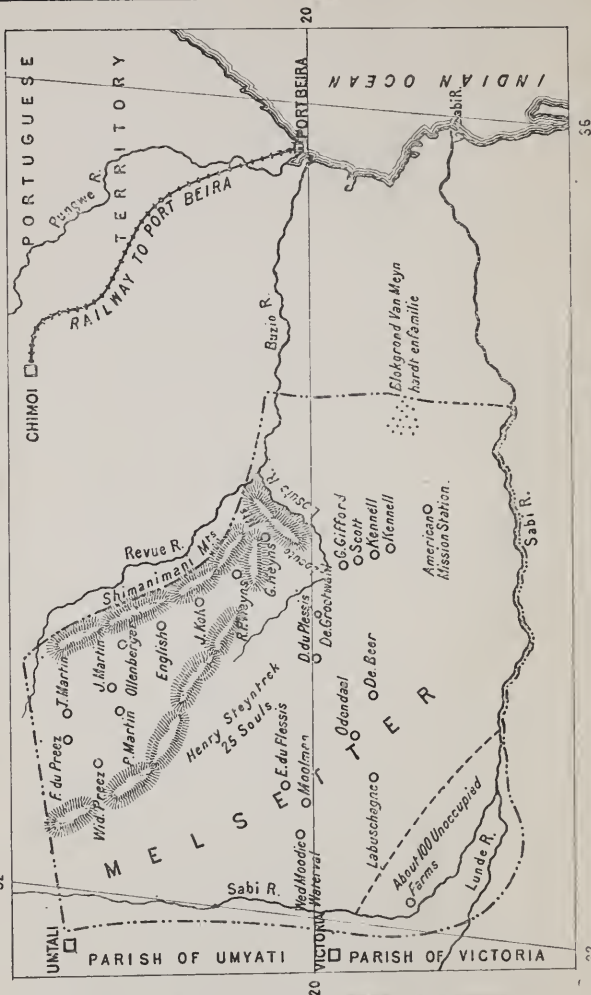
The police had to be sent after the Kafirs next morning. They brought them in, minus two, towards evening, and I could then, fortunately, lay my hand on my medicines and tea. I dosed our host and myself as well as possible, and slept once more, prepared to start again the next day for our people. We had still to do thirty miles, and, if my good companion could hold out, I was prepared to finish the journey so far that the first of the farms of our settlers could be reached. The Kafirs, however, would not go. Nothing would induce them to stir; they pleaded that they had to wait for their brothers who were behind. I was highly amused at this; and whilst I was considering what would most likely be the result, I saw our Kafirs scattering in all directions, just like fowls rush to all sides of the yard when a hawk happens to hover over the ground. I saw the cause of it. Our brave friend, who speaks the language like a native, had heard of their refusal, and overheard their plans and threats whilst in his hut. He rushed out, and used the only argument that helps on such occasions—the sjambok. They were quite willing to go now; off they went, each with his bundle on his head. They had no more scruples about their brothers.

We kept more or less in their company until 3 P.M.,

when we dismissed them to go over a short footpath across the last range of mountains. We supplied ourselves with a little food for our evening meal, and left them on our way to the first farm of the widow Du Preez, where we arrived that night at about 10.30 P.M. Here we were welcomed by Mr. Martin, the head of the Gazaland farmers, who had come down from his beautiful farm, Rocklands, to meet us. How glad we felt to be once more under a comfortable and hospitable roof! We slept that night without cares; there were no annoying Kafirs to fear, or prowling tigers or hyænas to annoy us. Next morning, we felt refreshed and full of joy. We were now in the heart of Gazaland. After breakfast and prayers, we mounted our good pony once more, and our guide, who had become footsore, mounted Mr. Martin's donkey. The head of the people then accompanied us on foot. We left in the midst of drizzling rain; and as the Kafirs were still behind with our coats, I put a woollen blanket over me, and in this attitude, after three hours' pacing, I reached Rocklands, wet from my knees downwards. Dry boots, which were too large for me, were exchanged for my own; clothes, which were too narrow for me, were borrowed from our host; and as the Kafirs did not turn up before the middle of the following day, I had to conduct Divine service for my people in this unclerical appearance. For the first time in my life I spoke on the text Acts viii. 26. Perhaps I was the first privileged one that did speak with appropriateness, as far as the locality was concerned, on this message after St. Philip's mission—at any rate, I had the honour and privilege of being the

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first minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Gazaland.

With the Shimanimani mountains as a precipitous boundary, this portion of Gazaland is certainly the most salubrious. The farms lie at an altitude of from 6,000 to 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. Having received instructions from those who were in authority, I divided the district of Melsetter into three parts—northern, middle, and southern. The village was fixed in the central portion, subject to the approval of the Government; a pretty strong congregation was established, the members of the Kerkeraad elected, and all requisite measures taken for the erection of a school-building and the appointment of a teacher. Having, with the aid of the Government officials, sent round notices to all the inhabitants, we had our parish meeting and the performance of all the services in accordance with the rules of our Church. Having done all this in the course of a fortnight, I prepared to go back to Umtali in the same way as I came, only this time we had good Kafirs, enabling us to do the return journey in less time and in cheerful spirits. A map of the parish is annexed.

These persevering farmers had come all the way from the Free State. They had gone *viâ* Victoria, across the majestic Sabi river, about a year before, climbed over a steep mountain called “Three-Spanberg,” and descended on the high mountain plateau. Some of their companions preferred to remain behind in the valley near the Buzio, and had to pay dearly for their venture; of 115 souls, 21 died there of fever last year during the rainy season. What sufferings

some of them went through will be best understood when I narrate a thrilling fact just as I heard it from the lips of Mr. R. van Rooyen, the present elder of the Victoria Congregation. One afternoon, when both he and his wife were suffering from a slight attack of fever, they received a small note, written by a young girl on a neighbouring farm, informing them that both her father and mother were dangerously ill, and appealing for immediate assistance. They got a sledge ready with six oxen before it, and a little native boy, and after a few hours were at the homestead. On entering, the girl remarked that her mother had been very quiet for some two days, but the father was talking much. Mrs. van R. went into the bedroom, and could not get much out of the male occupant. On putting her hand on the head of the female, she felt it was very cold. She placed her hand under the head, when she felt an unpleasant sensation, as if some things were crawling on her hand. Coming out to the light, she discovered that her hand was covered with maggots, and had to tell her husband to dig a grave immediately—the poor mother had been a corpse for at least two or three days! Hurriedly Mr. van R. and his Kafir boy dug a grave; but, as the sun had set already, they could not go further than a depth of about three feet. They placed the corpse in a cow-hide just as it was. Mr. and Mrs. van R. took hold of the head end, the little girl and the Kafir of the other end, and having covered the remains, after a short prayer had been offered up, they filled the grave and left the departed sister there until the day “when all that are in the grave will hear the voice of the

Son of God, and rise, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." The father died a short time after, and was buried; the surviving children, a son and daughter, were taken in by other homes, where they are now well provided for.

Such is the thrilling account. Had I not cause to render thanks unto Almighty God, that He had deemed me worthy to reach these people and offer religious consolations to them and the blessed Sacrament? Still more thankful do I feel, as will be more fully related in the last chapter, that these people henceforth will be spiritually and intellectually provided for. Praise be unto our God for His wonderful love!

CHAPTER XI.

BACK TO SALISBURY.

WHILST at Rocklands, entering the names of our members in the register, and those children that had received baptism in the baptismal register, and settling all things appertaining to the establishment of a congregation of our Church, I had been suffering from an ulcerated sore throat, coupled with malarial fever contracted in the lower regions of Manicaland. My worthy host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Martin, of whose Christian love I cannot speak too highly, had done all in their power to relieve my sufferings, and I felt very sad at parting. We left on Tuesday afternoon, my guide mounted on a donkey this time; went over the same ground as before, only much faster, and arrived at Umtali on Saturday at noon. I had had my share of the sun's heat in this trip; I looked almost black, so much so that the urbane and obliging Civil Commissioner of Umtali hardly recognised me when I reported myself at his office. However, a bath in the good Central Hotel and a little refreshing sleep put me in a very happy mood, and that same night I was sitting in the coach leaving for Salisbury. It was passing the night now with a roof over my head—better than my previous experience on the Gazaland

road, where one night a deserted cattle kraal, with beetles and cockroaches and mosquitoes in abundance, served as my resting-place, and another night my Kafirs made me a screen of branches to sleep under.

We left Umtali at about eleven o'clock that evening, and slowly travelled along, stopping for a few hours at the Oudzi river, where there is a wayside inn. The next day being Sunday, we rolled along until we came to Orowati, where we wanted breakfast but could not get any, as everything had been bespoken by Lord and Lady Bryce and suite, who were expected at any moment from the other direction. We could not even get a glass of milk; a stern Indian was in command, and he invariably told us that everything was for Lord *Rice*. At last I managed to get a little water, with which I refreshed myself, satisfying my hunger with the sandwiches which the Lord of the Central at Umtali had prepared for me. One of the party suggested on leaving to inform the Indian that he might mix the *milk* we could not get with the *rice* he was expecting, and that we left our tired mules behind to drag what was left of his expected party to Umtali.

When luncheon-time came on we came to another place where we had obtained a good breakfast on our previous passage. Whether the party that had just left the place had put the old man, the proprietor, out of his usual supply I cannot say, but he seemed to have nothing this time that we wanted. He was not in a very happy mood. One of the passengers asked for some refreshment, and was told "he hadn't any." Venturing to ask for something else, he received this characteristic reply: "Look'ee here, in this place you

must not expect to get what you ask, but be pleased to take what ye can get." After this, I happened to walk through his dining-room, desirous to see the *menu*; but, as I was in the act of making inquiries, I was abruptly told to "make myself scarce out of his place, and let th' oithers take their dinner (!) in pāce." He was a little round man, and I could survey him easily from above his cranium; but not desiring to make myself known to him I left him in "pāce," followed by nearly all the passengers except two, who, not having had anything to eat or drink since the morning, devoured what there was to be had, at an exorbitant charge.

We went on and came to Lawrencedale in the afternoon. Here I visited the grave of the late Hon. L. van der Bijl, who in the early days of the pioneers had settled down there and started what is now a paying and prosperous farm. We were very kindly received by Mr. Williams, whose fresh milk was a great boon to me. The grave is kept with very reverent affection, in very good order. How I felt at that grave! Nine years before I had met my friend in Kensington Gardens, still in the prime and glory of his life, and now I stood at his grave in the lonely and sequestered vale of Lawrencedale. *Sic transit gloria mundi*. With a short prayer, uttered in the strangeness of solitude, "that I might apply my heart unto wisdom, and learn the number of my days," I turned myself from that instructive spot to where the coach was waiting for me. We soon resumed our journey, and towards sunset came to the farm of Mr. Pretorius. That evening we reached Macheshe, and at about one o'clock

in the morning we reached Marandellas, where I resolved to break journey, to enable me to visit a great many young farmers who were living some fifteen miles away from the road, for the purpose of offering them religious instruction and holding confirmation.

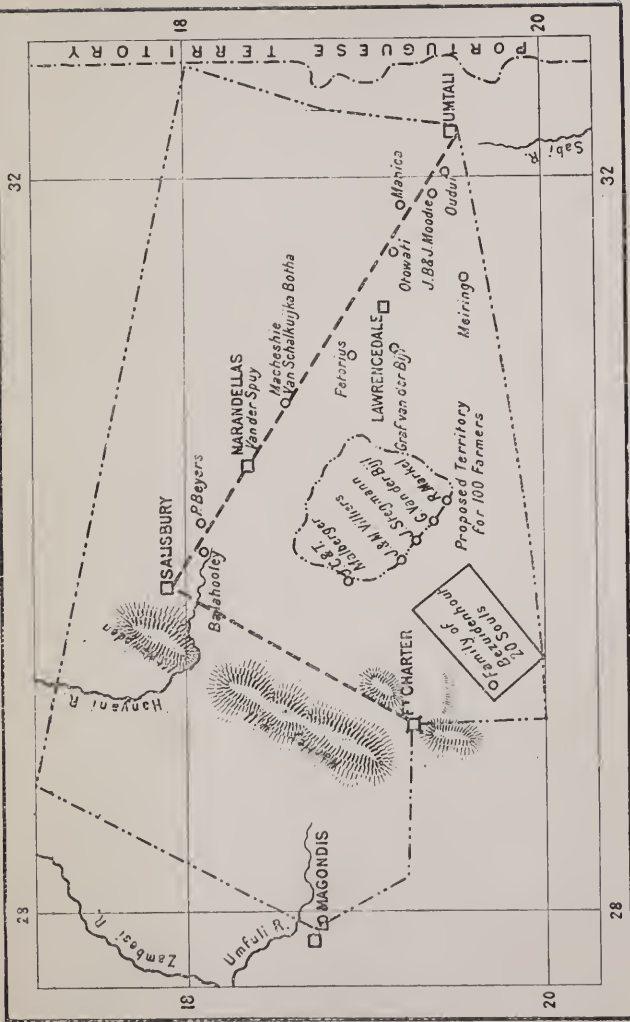
I felt glad that I could stretch my wearied limbs on a bed that night. I was soon fast asleep, and, awaking the next day, departed with a wagonette belonging to one of the foremost young settlers of that region. I sent circulars to all our members living as far as fifty miles from the place, and appointed next Lord's Day as the day of gathering for religious purposes. At first I was the guest of Mr. de Villiers, and afterwards of Messrs. G. van der Byl and R. Markel. They entertained me most hospitably, and quite kept up the proverbial renown of their family names in this respect. I had the pleasure of confirming two young men at our meeting and spoke at one of the services on Psalm cxix. 9. It was a gathering exclusively composed of young men. We celebrated the Lord's Supper in the afternoon, and in the evening had a most hearty farewell service. I shall never forget the happy week spent in the company of these young friends.

The following day I left for Salisbury on horseback. We were fifteen miles from Marandellas, where the main road is, and Salisbury is fifty-three miles from there. We had, therefore, to cover sixty-eight miles. Mr. de Villiers accompanied me, and I rode a spirited and strong horse. We turned out of the main road nine miles from Salisbury to a farm belonging to

Mr. P. Beyers, and covered that day fifty-nine miles. It was a strange sensation to me. The next day we left after breakfast, and arrived at the hospitable home of Mr. Botha at the "Kopje," Salisbury, just in time for dinner. The ride had been most exciting; three days afterwards the episcopal legs and arms still felt pains, reminding me of what I had gone through. My friend left the same afternoon, and I felt the parting, because he had been exceedingly kind to me.

As soon as I was able to walk over to Salisbury from my host's house, I commenced doing what I deemed necessary for my people's welfare. I had the pleasure of holding short conferences with the Acting Administrator and the Surveyor-General, and the result of our meetings was that gifts in ground for church and school purposes were conceded to me, and a support vouchsafed in very deed to co-operate with me to develop our church and school-work amongst the farmers as much as possible. Truly the Chartered Company have done, and are doing, much for the advancement (both in agricultural and spiritual, as well as intellectual, aspects) of the members of my Church. To me, personally, they have been most kind. An outline is given of the future parish of Salisbury.

I visited the few members that belonged to our Church in the town. There were some living a nomadic life to the north-west of the town, and I succeeded in reaching a few. The following Sunday I had three services in the court-house, and succeeded in getting an audience of about thirty. The Lord's Sacrament was administered, one member con-



THE FUTURE PARISH OF SALISBURY.

firmed, one child baptized, and an incipient effort made to commence regular work in the course of this year. During the services an incident took place which is worth recording. I had found out that during the morning service a farmer had attended who was most attentive during the sermon. I became acquainted with him at the close of the service and found that he belonged to the Separatist, or "Dopper," section of the Dutch Church in the Colony. I told him that all members of the Dutch sections, having the same standards as the Colonial Dutch Reformed Church, were welcome, and would be received as members, if they so desired, on their producing proof that they had been admitted to membership in their own Church. He argued for some time, but I informed him that I was working for unity amongst our people, and set up one standard, under which all could find rest. The main difference between his Church and my own was that they only sing the Psalms, whilst we have an authorized combination of hymns with the Psalms. He promised to consider this and return in the evening. In the evening he returned; and it so happened that I gave out two psalms to be sung. When the second psalm was read by me I noticed that he was vehemently pulling the arm of my host, who sat immediately in front of him, and that he made some remark when he had succeeded in arresting his attention. He was seriously attentive whilst the sermon was delivered, and sang most devoutly during the psalm. At the close I gave out a hymn, when his brow darkened, and, leaving a fairly large contribution in the plate, he disappeared,

promising my host that he would return to visit me the next day at my temporary residence. Curious to know why he had so disported himself during the service, I asked my host later on what he had remarked. My host said, "He told me you must be a splendid minister, one entirely after his heart, not only in the sermon, but especially as you give out nothing but psalms." I have hopes of seeing him on the members' register when I return.

Another two days were spent in leave-taking, and finally fixing up the preliminaries for future church work; and having enjoyed most happy friendship in Mr. Botha's house, I left on the evening of November 5, southwards, with a joyful heart, as my host subsequently wrote: "Truly you may go on your way rejoicing."

CHAPTER XII.

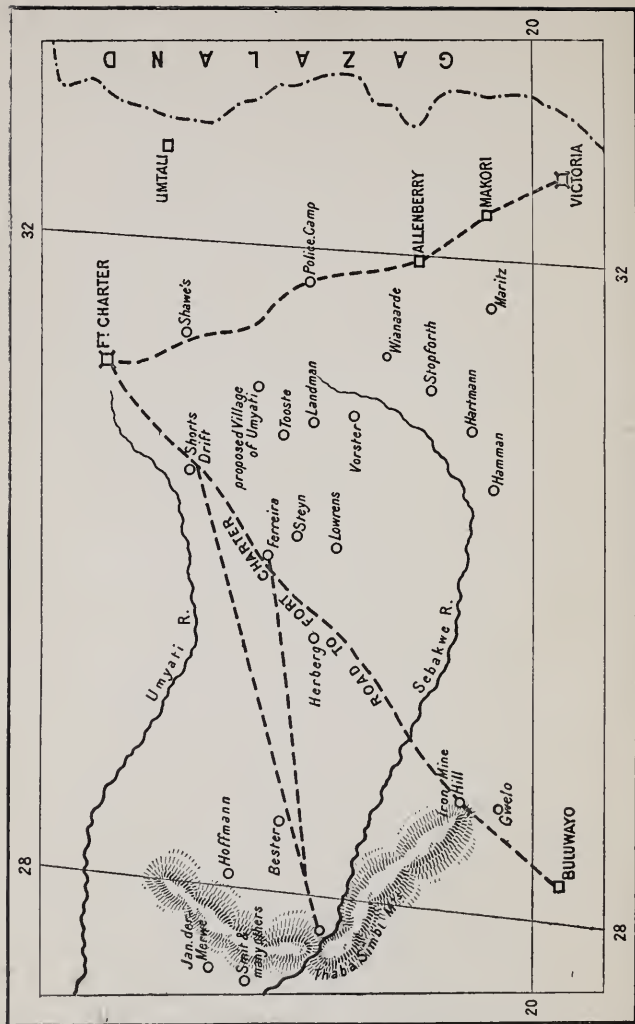
UMYATI AND VICTORIA.

THE coach brought me to Charter the following morning. We had taken up a passenger at Six Miles' Spruit who was suffering from a stiff leg and the last traces of rheumatic fever. The cause of this was a very sad one. He told us that some time ago he had been walking out to some mines in the neighbourhood of Hartley Hills. On his way a cart drawn by oxen was passing by, and the driver, hearing that he was going in the same direction, invited him to take a seat in the cart. Having done so, they went a little way further, when through some cause the cart was upset, the occupants thrown out, with the cart falling on the young man's leg. He found, when he was attended to, that his leg was broken above the knee, and he lay down in a helpless condition till daybreak. The next morning the man, who had attended mostly to the repairs of his cart, went his way, deaf to all appeals from the young man to render assistance. He lay in the open veldt unattended to for three days, when a native found him, and reported the accident to the proprietor of the wayside inn. Assistance was promptly obtained from Salisbury, and the young man brought to the hospital; and when he

had sufficiently recovered he was sent back to the wayside hotel to recruit. He seemed to me to be still in a precarious state of health, unable to move about freely even with his crutches. In the coach he had a fresh attack of fever and looked very weak.

We had gone about eight miles away from Charter when the front axle of the coach broke, compelling us to get out. All sorts of plans were proposed, and at last one of the men was sent back on a mule to fetch another vehicle from Charter. Every hour's delay meant a heavy fine to the coach proprietor; to prevent this I suggested that two of our passengers should put their shoulders to the wheel and tie up the broken part with poles above and under the axle. This was a difficult task, but it was so well done by my young farmer-friends that the coach thus repaired held out till it reached Buluwayo, a distance of about two hundred miles. It saved us several hours' delay. We were late, but not so late as we should have been if we had had to wait for the wagon. At about midnight I arrived at my destination, Enkeldoorn, the farm of the field-cornet of the district. I was very kindly received by Mr. Ferreira, and remained his guest till the time for our services approached.

When we left this district in August, we had promised to return in November. The days of meeting and the locality had been fixed. We went to the appointed farm with a light cart, drawn by four horses, which was a novelty to me, as I had not seen horses before a cart since I left Pietersburg. The drive was an exceedingly pleasant one, and we came

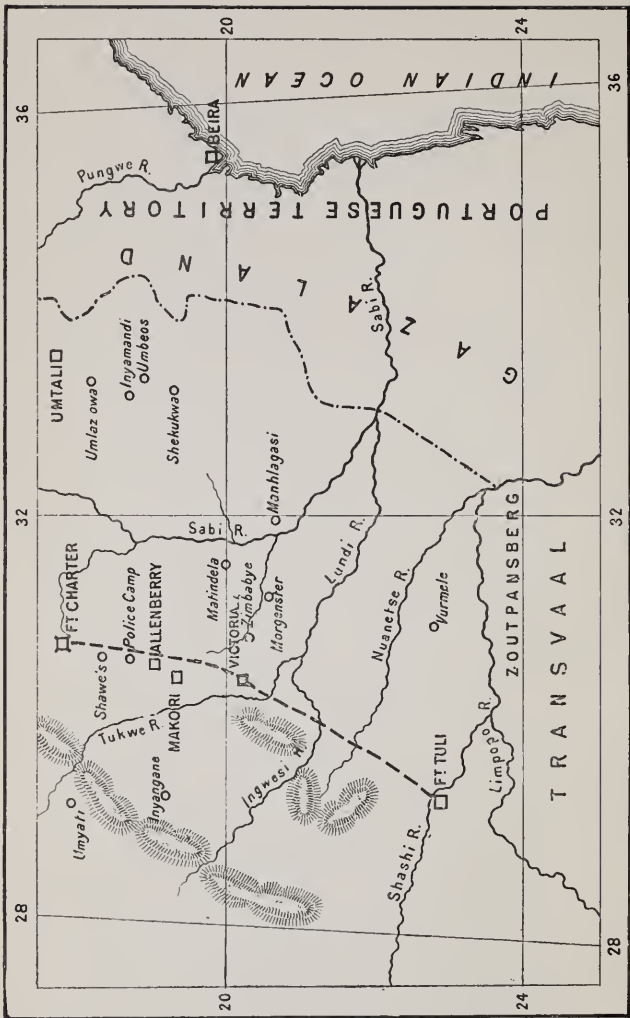


to the farm sooner than I had expected. The good friends were ready to receive me, and I was brought to a new hut in which no human being had resided before. Everything was done to make my stay as comfortable as possible. An awning was spread in front of the verandah, under which we held our services from Friday till Sunday evening. A good deal of work had to be gone through—the entering of a long list of members' names in the parish register; the registration of the baptized children in the baptismal register; a meeting of members to decide various details of parish institutions; a service of preparation for the Lord's Supper; the confirmation of candidates; the Communion service, the thanksgiving service, and a valedictory service. After this a meeting of the vestrymen, or Kerkeraad; the signing of various parish documents and confirmation of minutes of meetings held; the visiting of the sick and aged; the consolation of the afflicted—all this and various other details had to be performed in three days by one solitary individual. And the people had come up with a large number of wagons and carts in happy spirits, glad to see their minister's face and each other's faces, rejoiced to be able to listen to the preaching of God's Word again. These days were happy days. Having undertaken to provide them with a missionary and teacher after the rainy season, and distributed collection lists amongst the members of the Kerkeraad for the building-fund, I left the newly-constituted parish of Umyati to the care of the elders of the Church.

I returned to the farm of Mr. Ferreira that same

day, and had some experience of the rainy season. The storm had burst over the parish on the previous day with such fury that we were obliged in the forenoon to remove our Communion celebration to the room of the farm-house, which again necessitated the introduction of candles, as the place had become very dark on account of the clouded sky. This renewed downpour came in real earnestness. It rained almost without interruption from 11 A.M. till 6 P.M., and so darkened the sky that you could hardly see two hundred yards away from you. So dense was the rainfall that the track, or "spoor," of a hyæna was found by us in the wagon-road not three hundred yards from the house in which we were, and no one had been aware of the presence of this animal. The next morning we left this farm with a private cart, going in the direction of Victoria. We had the pleasure of staying over on the farm of Mrs. Maritz, whose husband had been murdered some months before, and holding Divine service once more to all who lived in the vicinity. The parish outlines are delineated on the map facing p. 99.

At last we left for Victoria on Thursday morning with a cart and six mules, and in the afternoon reached Makori once more, where we enjoyed Mr. Coole's hospitality. We discussed many appropriate subjects in his house, had a good night's rest, all without any charge, and the pleasure of receiving an open invitation to call whenever I might pass. Mr. Bezuidenhout, who showed me much kindness on the way, brought me into Victoria the next day in time for dinner with my friend, Mr. R. van Rooyen, whose



dear little children recognised and knew me as soon as I came into the house. Here I visited and received visits, and found to my joy that the number of members had considerably increased since my last visit in June and July. The number of souls had been doubled, and although this was the smallest parish, they had at their congregational meeting next day sufficient courage to undertake the responsibilities of parish work and life. The same routine which had been gone through at Umyati was followed out here; and by the time this book is circulating, this parish will have a teacher, trained at the Normal College of Capetown, and an undergraduate of the Cape University. A map of the parish is annexed.

Having done everything that was needful for this parish, and leaving its future in the hands of the Kerkeraad, guided by the Rev. Mr. Louw, the head of our Mission Station at Morgenster, some twenty-three miles to the east of Victoria, I bade good-bye to my dear friends. I left with the wagon and oxen of the Mission Station to Ironmine Hill, where I was to meet the coach to take me back to Buluwayo. I had hoped that the coach might be late, as it was reputed to be latterly, and that by travelling through one night I might succeed in this. We did our best; in the midst of heavy rain, with terrific thunderstorms both night and day, the oxen went along; but in spite of our wishes to be in time, we came too late. The coach had been there before its time—*mirabile dictu*—and so we were forced to remain in a hut at Ironmine Hill from Thursday noon till Sunday afternoon, not in the best of health.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONCE MORE AT BULUWAYO.

THE non-success of overtaking the coach at Ironmine Hill caused several disappointments. In the first place, I had promised to be back at Buluwayo on the 22nd of November, in time for the services on the 24th. This promise remained unfulfilled, and the good parishioners, together with Mr. Groenewald, expected me in vain. Immediately on my arrival I had sent a telegram to Buluwayo; but for certain reasons, I had the pleasure of finding my telegram, three days *after* my subsequent arrival, safely deposited in a certain office. It had taken *three* days to reach that office. Whilst on my way from Victoria I had been suffering from an attack of bilious fever, and this was not improved by constant exposure to the inelement weather. My host, Mr. Jepson, met me on my arrival, and promised to make my forced stay as comfortable as possible. I got a very comfortable bed, and a large, roomy hut; but the hut was more "holy than righteous," as a wag described it, not very capable of keeping the rain out. I had, therefore, to listen to two sounds to keep me awake; first of all, the constant dripping of raindrops on the floor,

which the wise king once said was like a quarrelsome housewife—a thing which poor Mr. Caudle went through all his lifetime in a very stoical manner, but which I could not relish, as I had not grown accustomed to that. The next sound was like the ticking of a clock all night and day, but more audible and less pleasant during the silent watches of the night. It was caused by the active ants doing their best to bring down the woodwork of the hut, a big legion inflicting their dental attacks simultaneously on divers parts. With a high temperature and a sick headache, this double nuisance proved very irritating; and if my good host sees these pages, and he remembers that I was not always displaying that meekness and patience which I ought to have shown, he will put it down to the above causes, and accept my apology.

It is very difficult for caterers in wayside inns at present to provide their guests with everything that is needed for their comfort. There was no rice, and very little sugar. Owing to lack of transport, these things were high in price and scarce. Vegetables had to come by road from Victoria. I remember the day I left Salisbury, mothers apologising for the scanty sweetness of tea or coffee, as sugar was “at a price.” Fresh meat and milk were also difficult to supply. But my host did what he could, and his good assistant gave me as much comfort as he could afford in the shape of literature and pills. The former “enlightened my understanding” and made me forget my ills, and the latter relieved the head and liver. By the time that Sunday came I had a clear head, and a very good dinner with a refreshing dessert of tinned fruit.

The bill was very small, and I was made to feel that I had been very welcome. Our parting was hearty and sincere, and whenever I come back to host Jepson's home, I know I shall feel at ease.

The coach was late this time by some hours; but, with only three passengers, we had a light freight, and went along at a spinning rate. We reached Gwelo at about nine o'clock, having to go slowly over the latter part of the road because it was filled with water. On a previous visit I had to complain of scarcity of water; now there was too much. We had our evening meal at the Coach Hotel, and continued our journey with a quick span of mules. Next morning, when I opened my eyes, I was told by my fellow-passengers that I had slept remarkably well; in fact, so they said, my sound method of sleeping had disturbed them. But they bore with the weaknesses of the aging bishop, and I appreciated their indulgence very much.

In the evening we reached Buluwayo. A few of my friends came to the coach to welcome me, and carried my luggage down to my rooms. I had two or three cups of my favourite Cape tea in the house of one of my deacons, and having gone through a heavy batch of accumulated letters I retired, and soon slept in peaceful slumbers. The next morning called me to the transaction of important business. Financial and pastoral duties and congregational aspects had to be considered; the building had required money, the good ladies were doing their very best to have their stalls prepared for the forthcoming bazaar, and the young people were anxiously and studiously preparing

for Confirmation. The class had been extending itself, and taxed the teacher's patience to the utmost. Various little things had to be looked into, and, where needed, corrected and removed. On the Friday of that week the bazaar had to take place, and as this was new to us we had to exercise much faith and endurance. When the morning came, however, every one was at his place, and at about noon I opened the proceedings in a snitable manner in the presence of some of the higher officials and their good ladies. From the very first I noticed how willing the Government officials were to promote our cause. The court-room was placed at our disposal, and every facility afforded by the officers to make our church and school-work a success. As the day wore on, we saw that our prayers and the good ladies' work had not been in vain. In the evening the court-room was simply uncomfortably full. I was glad to notice that men of all shades of opinions and denominations were present, and spending freely. Young and old came up to me from time to time and encouraged me. The stalls were rapidly emptied; the takings at the door were handsome. Throughout the proceedings I felt that the keynote was a hearty desire to let the work of our Church prove a thorough success. Christians and Hebrews—and I am proud to say that I have many friends amongst the latter—worked and spent together, with the result that when 10.30 had come, I rose with sincere feelings to thank one and all from my heart for the noble response that had been made to my appeal. The greater portion of the money that was required for our building was secured; we had cause,

for two days after, when our services took place, to praise the Lord.

These services were of a solemn nature, and were well attended. The attention was encouraging, the number of young members confirmed fairly large, even some married people made confession of their faith. The valedictory service on Sunday evening was a very impressive one. I spoke on Genesis vii. 1, and I was subsequently informed that God's emphatic command had gone home in many hearts. The remaining days of the week were spent in visiting the sick and dying; one sudden death occurred, and the burial service was conducted by myself. It was a sad sight. I had stood there on a former occasion, when a young child was brought to its last resting place. Whilst I was going through the service, the mother broke away from her husband's arm and frantically laid hold of the little coffin, crying with a hollow voice, as if it came from the nether world, "My child, my child." I was obliged to stop, and succeeded to induce her to let go her hold of the little coffin. As soon as it was lowered into the grave she wanted to go down with it, and exclaimed: "O God, my God, this is too much, too much; my last, my all Thou hast taken. I am now deprived of the joy of my heart. Broken, broken, mad with sorrow. Thou hast done it. It is too hard." I led her away afterwards and calmed her agitated bosom and lacerated heart.

On this occasion, it was the father of a large family in poor circumstances, and caused a great loss. The mother was confined to her bed with a baby four days old. They were lying in a tent made of calico. It

was a sad scene; on the one hand I had to soothe, and on the other to behold a dying man to whom spiritual admonition was of no use, as he was unconscions. I could only offer up a prayer for his departing soul. When we came to the graveyard, a distance of about two miles from the town, we found no one there. A grave of insufficient depth had been dug, and it was too narrow in the centre to allow the coffin to go down to the bottom. There were no tools to widen the grave, and as a heavy shower of rain was coming down, the burial party resolved to wedge in the coffin as much as possible and fill up the grave. Whilst I attempted to remonstrate, one old man remarked: "Well, you see, *he* won't get out again, and *we* can't afford to get wet." I read the burial service and went home.

The rainy season had set in well. There was nothing to do for me at Buluwayo, as Mr. Groenewald could attend to the Sunday and schoolwork. In the country parishes I could absolutely do nothing. Subsequent letters have told me that I made a proper decision at the time. In Gazaland it rained for twenty days, almost continuously; between Salisbury and Umtali one party was driven out of their temporary encampment, their wagon; fever was rife at Victoria, and before leaving the congregation of Umyati had resolved that I was not to come there again until the third Sunday in May. I resolved, therefore, to return to the Colony, with fore-knowledge of the authorities of the Colonial Church, for a while, and lecture on God's work in Rhodesia, the proceeds to be for the building fund of our school-buildings in that land.

In this, thanks be rendered unto God, I have admirably succeeded. Having held a last service, I took leave of my friends at Buluwayo, promising to return again to them after the rainy season, if not as their fixed minister, a position which they had offered me a few days before with unanimous votes, then, once more, as the representative of our Church in their midst (if required), till the middle of December, 1896.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOME.

AFTER abundant rain throughout the week, we had a sunny morning on the day of my departure. Not that there were indications of a cessation of rain; on the contrary, in the distant horizon all around the thunder-clouds were massing to discharge their electric fluid in the course of the day with the concomitant downpour of rain. There was sufficient warmth and light to make most of us feel cheerful, except one, my young assistant, who seemed mute as the hour of parting approached. The coach drew up in front of Messrs. Zeederberg & Co.'s office, our luggage was placed on its roof, and seven of us each took the seat assigned. I had my cosy corner, facing the horses, and felt joyful at the prosperous turn which the Mission had produced. A kind friend supplied me with abundant quantity of sandwiches, another with a large cake, and my hand-bag had a good supply of biscuits. The Government had given me a seat at their expense; at the hour of departure I myself felt overwhelmed by the pressure of unexpected blessings. There was a good array of friends and parishioners to bid me good-bye, and Mr. Zeederberg showed me much kindness, together with his polite manager, Mr.

Dawes. After a good deal of hand-shaking, the coach started with us on a straight tour of six days and five nights, and we had sufficient opportunity to study the nature and appearance of our fellow-passengers.

We formed a strange mixture. An officer of Her Majesty's army, a merchant, an accountant, a horse dealer, an engine-fitter, a surveyor and a parson. It is always an experience which one has when you have to undertake a journey of this kind to feel afraid that your neighbour may be noisy, and that life will be unpleasantly situated for the time being. On this occasion we were most fortunate. There never was an unpleasant word between us; all were happy and willing to make the journey as pleasant as possible to each other. Indeed, I feel it my duty to express my acknowledgment of the kindness which was shown to me by the other passengers. For three nights I was allowed to have the back row of seats all to myself, enabling me to have a fair amount of sleep. We enjoyed the trip immensely. At night-time, before we tried to embrace Morpheus, one of the party would give us a song, of which he seemed to have an inexhaustible stock, songs verging on the ludicrous, but always within bounds, or always prepared to turn into the channel of propriety at the slightest indication or sign on my part. The last night, when we had a lady in the coach, was the best of all. Our amateur singer, having got a candle from the driver, placed himself on the floor of the coach under the lower portions of the passengers who remained above the seats. A good waterproof of the merchant's prevented all from getting wet, for the rain was falling steadily, and everyone

seemed happy in the midst of rain and a gloomy sky outside. Well, our friend the singer, having gone through several songs, found that he was getting sleepy. The candle had all along been alight between his fingers. Along his chin passed the nether "sticks" of my *vis-à-vis*, who might well be termed "Long shanks," and my episcopal short legs were in between a portion of the long ones. At a certain moment, the coach gave a jerk, the long legs passed under the chin and caused our singer to give a sound as if he was throttled, the candle went out of the coach window as if it had been a rejected meteorite, and after hearty laughter we became quiet for the night, many of us, if not all, remembering the needs of our dear ones and ourselves in solemn stillness before the ears of Him who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. We arrived at Mafeking next morning, minus our merchant, who turned up later in the evening at the hotel where we had put up until the train should depart.

This route is the quickest and cheapest of the land routes. The traveller should be on his guard, however. As long as you can alight at one of the many business places of Mr. Julius Weil, you can rely on first-class treatment and considerable attention; but when you get past Mochuli, you come into the land of Khama. Truly it will be a blessing to the weary traveller if once the railway is finished to Buluwayo, and the railway restaurant is opened. There are two stretches of more than a hundred miles each where you may get water at the coach station, but nothing more. A Kafir may bring you some milk from a neighbouring post or kraal; but nothing else will you

be able to get. We came to Palapye in the evening, where we got a fair meal. We had gone over a hundred miles, if not more, from Tati. We were hungry and thirsty. There were not even aerated waters to be had; of course, stronger drinks would never be tolerated. We asked for milk, and got a cupful; there was no more, the rest was required for the coffee. Now surely it is but right when human beings have been travelling that they should be able to get some refreshments. We could get nothing except coffee and water. It is well known what has been the cause of all this. I admire Khama's pluck in keeping intoxicating liquor from his people; but when it comes to allowing a weary traveller a glass of lemonade or soda-water, and there is nothing of any mild, non-alcoholic beverage to be had for love or money, the string is kept too tightly on the bow, and causes incalculable hardships to the systems of beings who need it for their refreshment. Nor can I restrain myself on the sanitary condition of whatever part of the town we passed through; our olfactory nerves observed "smells" that were wafted into the coach with the evening air of an abominably sickening nature. I can assure my readers that our host did what he could to help us to feel comfortable, but not one of us regretted that we could go out of the town. And in what position? To go over a stretch of another hundred miles (to have not a single source for supply all that way) to Palla, where nothing could be obtained, but where, thanks to the kindness of Mr. Weil and the officer in command of the B. B. Police, we were allowed to have a horse and cross the Transvaal border to reach the hotel, where

we had sweet fresh milk, fresh butter, fresh eggs, good coffee, a splendid breakfast, and where we could lay in a fresh stock of what was needed for the sustenance of our bodies !

Having left Palla our miseries were at an end ; henceforth we had excellent hotels, and it was joy to travel with delightful company. On reaching Mafeking we had much rain ; the hotels were full, but we managed to get a part of a room where we could leave behind what we had gathered of dust and exposure, and appear once more in the dress of civilised life at the table of a well-organised hotel. Here also we found old friends, some of them in high official life, and when that night we stretched ourselves on the seat of a first-class compartment we fancied ourselves in Elysium. It was hardly possible at first to realise our position ; if anyone had said four months before that we would so soon be able to report sufficient progress to allow a temporary break, we should have considered him a fit subject for Bedlam. Yet here we were returning to our dear home, where the members had sometimes lived in anxious suspense as to what might have become of the husband and father, and no one had dared to think that his return could have taken place so soon. Yes, by the mercy of God, unto Whose name we render thanks and glory, it had become a truth ; we were going home to find all the dear ones well and happy. The journey was brought to a finish on the third morning after leaving Mafeking, a distance of eight hundred and seventy-five miles from Capetown. And who is the genius who should have the honour of

this rapid communication with a land whose most southerly town lies some fifteen hundred miles away from Capetown? To whom do we owe, in a great measure, the blessings of an extended trade route almost as far as the Zambesi? Who was it that gave his money, his talents, and his influence to accomplish the development of the north? Who else than Cecil Rhodes? It is by his and the Chartered Company's work that now hundreds of farmers are making handsome profits out of a marvellously-increasing transport service, and hundreds of Dutch homes have been made happy in the far north. As more than one farmer said to me, as their friend and minister: "Sir, here we have peace, and prospects of plenty; no commandeering to receive no pay, and lose nearly all; here is a haven of rest for our homes and our hearts."

CHAPTER XV.

TO RHODESIA FOR THE LAST TIME.

IMMEDIATELY after my return to my temporary home I was busily engaged in drawing up a report in duplicate for the authorities of our Church on the work that, by the mercy of God, had been accomplished in so short a time. It was best summarised by our esteemed Moderator, the Rev. Andrew Murray, in an official notice to the Church as follows:—

“The Moderamen of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa desires to bring to the notice of all concerned that a conference has been held with the Rev. P. A. Strasheim. It has been ascertained that the result of that brother’s mission to Rhodesia and Gazaland has been the formation of four congregations of our Church, viz., Buluwayo, Umyati, Victoria, and Malsetter in Gazaland with the appointment of Kerkerads (elders and deacons). These congregations have handed in their guarantees for the salary of the minister who will go forth to labour in their midst, and also for the salary of the teachers and missionaries who will work there. The first church and school-building at Buluwayo, which has cost more than £800, built of bricks and stone, and provided with pews and school furniture, together with

two rooms for the teacher, is completed and in use. Mr. Grocneward has been working at Buluwayo since the 1st of October, 1895, as missionary and teacher for account of that congregation.

“The Rev. Mr. Strasheim, who was called at Buluwayo as the first minister, has been obliged, for reasons known to the Moderamen, to decline that call. He will once more, in the early part of April, proceed to Rhodesia and Gazaland to supply the congregation, locate the teachers, and preside at a fresh call as representative of our Church.

“During the past year the congregations have been visited twice, the Holy Sacrament administered twice, with Confirmation of members. Salisbury, where most likely the fifth congregation will be established this year, and Gazaland were visited once, and the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism were duly administered together, with Confirmation of members. In each congregation a register of members and baptismal register has been started, together with a minute-book for the meetings of the Kerkeraads. Most of the names of members belonging to our Church in that land have been properly registered, together with those confirmed, baptized, and married.

“Our brother confirmed forty-four members, baptized about forty children, and married two couples. More than seven hundred members of our Church were found during his visit to that land. Many were engaged in entering the various parishes from the Free State, the Colony, and Transvaal.

“As, on account of the rainy season which had commenced in November, it was impossible for him

to do anything more for the congregations to the north and east of Buluwayo, he resolved (with the pre-knowledge of the Moderamen) to leave Buluwayo in December, Mr. Groenewald attending to the Divine service at Buluwayo. He intends during the rainy season of that country to hold collections in the Colony (where possible) for the building fund of the buildings which have still to be erected in the three remaining parishes at the close of the rainy season. He hopes (D.V.) this year still to see these buildings completed.

“Our brother made an agreement with the Government of Rhodesia, which contains very favourable articles for the extension of our Church. The Government gives up to £300, on the pound for pound principle, for each school-building, as also a portion of the salary of each teacher for five years. The buildings and internal management of these schools remain the property of the Dutch Reformed Church, whilst the members have placed themselves under the superintendence of our Church.”

This refers to the past. To supply the wants of teachers was the first and main object of my visit to the Colony. In this I have succeeded. Two missionaries, Messrs. Le Ronx and Liebenberg, are proceeding to that land with me, one to Gazaland, and the other to Umyati; both men of considerable culture and noted piety. Another will proceed to Victoria in two months' time, with a proper training received in the Normal College and three University certificates, besides a Teacher's certificate from the Department of Public Education. We hope to have

four buildings in working order within the next six months with properly conducted schools. Another minister, who will act as superintendent of all this work, in succession to me, will be called in April, and it is hoped (when he has accepted) that the work will continue to prosper for the good of souls.

My engagements for this year are tabulated in the following time-table:—

Sunday,	19th and 26th April,	at Buluwayo.
„	3rd and 10th May,	at Victoria.
„	17th and 24th May,	at Umyati.
„	31st May,	at Salisbury.
„	7th June,	at Umtali.
„	14th, 21st, and 28th June,	in Gazaland.
„	5th July,	in Gazaland.
„	12th July,	at Umtali.
„	19th July,	at Marandellas.
„	26th July,	at Salisbury.
„	2nd August,	at Umyati.
„	9th August till 4th October,	at Buluwayo.
„	11th October,	at Victoria.
„	18th October,	at Umyati.
„	25th October,	at Salisbury.
„	1st November,	at Umtali.
„	8th November,	in Gazaland.
„	22nd November, 6th and 13th December,	in Buluwayo.

The reader will perceive from this, that as superintendent I have to devote the months of May, June, July, and a portion of August, to the work in the northerly and easterly parts of Rhodesia. In these months I shall have to do the same travelling which I went through last year, viz, 952 miles in all. But my task will be a much lighter one. The foundation of all the work has been laid, and I shall have three

additional helpers to occupy the posts permanently when I am required to be elsewhere. May God in His mercy continue even more to bless and extend the work of our Church to His everlasting glory!

Moreover, I revisit these scenes, if my life is spared, with much more joy and interest than before. Most of the faces are known to me; I have a host of friends and acquaintances in the land who were strangers to me last year. We have seen each other's faces; they trusted me when I was a stranger in their midst, and in response to that trust, I wish once more to render my services, poor and weak though they may be.

They have suffered trials during my absence, of which I have received accounts. The senior elder of the Melssetter congregation, Mr. M. J. Martin, wrote to me under date of February 27th, from his farm, Roeklands:—

“Our condition is replete with care, the members of the last trek included. We cannot barter any more food from the natives, as they have nothing left, the swarms of locusts having destroyed everything. The rivers between Chimoia and Umtali being full, our wagons cannot go there to obtain our necessities of life. My son ventured to go, but had to return empty-handed. To crown everything, both he and the servants are down with fever, contracted in the Portuguese lowlands. I have to make provision for the wants of two families who came with the last trek in indigent circumstances. These I have also to supply with food. Many a day we have nothing in the house; yet the Lord hath always made provision to supply our wants.”

In a subsequent part of that letter he writes: "On New Year's Day we opened a subscription list for our part of the building fund. We got together £65." Glory be to God for His loving kindness. These are the farmers of Gazaland. They are in want, on account of impossibility to communicate with the stores; yet they contribute so much that, with a sum of money which I hope to give them on behalf of the Parent Church, and the Government contribution, our first school-building will be almost out of debt.

Who can refuse to go and work again amongst such sterling men? Not I. By the grace of God I am leaving with my helpers next week, and we will do whatsoever our hand findeth to do for the extension of our Master's Kingdom, the intellectual and spiritual welfare of our people in Rhodesia and Gazaland, and assist in preparing a reward for the patient toil and far-seeing genius of the founder of that State.

May our Master give me and my helpers grace and strength to put the finishing touch to His work to His glory "in the land of Cecil Rhodes!"

THE END.



